CAPTAIN LUCY AND LIEUTENANT BOB

ALINE HAVARD

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"IS THE TWENTY-EIGHTH GOING OVER THIS WEEK?"

CAPTAIN LUCY AND LIEUTENANT BOB

BY

ALINE HAVARD

PHILADELPHIA

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1918

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Captain Lucy and Lieutenant Bob

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Introduction

Some of the girls who read this first story of Lucy Gordon's army life have spent their lives on army posts as well as she, and perhaps have even lived on Governor's Island. A good many others, though, have only visited posts, and have never felt that they knew much about the life of army girls, except that it was full of sudden changes. But in this last year the American army has grown very real and absorbing to every girl in America. Not one of them but has become an army girl in spirit, with some strong tie to bind her to our posts, to our training camps, or to our fighters on the Western Front.

The war is as yet only beginning for Lucy Gordon, and the old, pleasant times are just ending, but, like every other girl in America, she is trying hard to find the courage and cheerfulness which have never yet been wanting in our Service and which are going to help America to win.

Aline Havard.

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Captain Lucy and Lieutenant Bob

CHAPTER I

MARIAN ARRIVES

"THE Major's glasses, if you please, Miss Lucy," said Sergeant Cameron, pausing in the doorway with a bow. Lucy, who had run down-stairs on hearing the bell, smiled a good-morning to the tall, soldierly figure that blocked the sunlit entrance, and went into Major Gordon's study for the forgotten glasses.

"I was to tell Mrs. Gordon for the Major," Sergeant Cameron added when Lucy returned to the door, "that the guests expected to-day will come over on the twelve o'clock boat. The Major had a telephone message at his office, from the city."

"Oh, all right, Sergeant. I'll tell Mother," said Lucy, whereupon the non-commissioned officer turned smartly on his heel and made off in the direction of the Headquarters Building.

It was a beautiful July morning on Governor's Island, and beyond the tree-dotted lawns between the rows of officers' quarters, the parade ground was alive with marching men;—companies of Infantry which had drilled there for hours, a little part of the mammoth war activity that pervaded the post, the headquarters of the Army's Eastern Department. A faint breeze blew from across New York Harbor, fluttering the flag on the ramparts, but the air was very hot.

Lucy ran up-stairs again to her room and dropped down in front of her mirror to tie the ribbon at the back of her smoothly brushed hair, while she called out to the maid who was mounting the stairs after her, "Oh, Elizabeth, Father just sent word that the Leslies will be here for lunch,—on the twelve o'clock boat."

"Yes, Miss Lucy," answered Elizabeth's pleasant, guttural voice. "You tell your mother, will you?"

"Oh, yes, I'm going right away."

Lucy gave a last tug at the ribbon, a doubtful glance at her mop of fair hair, which with the best of efforts never stayed smooth very long, and rose to her feet. She was not tall for fourteen years, and her dresses were still short, but since her last birthday she had begun to take a little more pains with her appearance, as was shown just now by

her returning to tidy up again after feeding the squirrels. The face reflected in the glass was a very attractive one, with its frank, bright hazel eyes and lips ever ready to smile. But Lucy never spent much time in wondering whether she looked " nice " or not. There was more than that to do just now on Governor's Island.

She ran down-stairs two steps at a time and, shooing out an inquiring squirrel which was coming in by the screen door William had left open, went out on the piazza. On the steps sat a curly-headed five-year-old boy, the baby of the Gordon family.

" Come on, William! Come with me? " asked Lucy, holding out a hand to the little boy, who jumped off the steps and trotted along beside her.

" Where you going, Lucy? " he inquired as they followed the brick walk along the line of quarters called " General's Row," because the General's house heads it, toward the path crossing over to the other officers' line or " Colonel's Row."

" Over to see Mother about something," said Lucy, continuing her way around the foot of Colonel's Row to where, after five minutes' walk, the water of the harbor gleamed through the trees and the Officers' Club showed by the tennis courts at the end of the parade.

In one of the second floor rooms of the big, yellow brick building the Red Cross had its headquarters,

and here Lucy and William were bound as they entered the wide archway and followed the stairs leading to the ballroom and upper floor. A buzz of ladies' voices came from the doorway, beyond which twenty or thirty officers' wives and daughters were hard at work over tables piled with gauze and muslin. Mrs. Gordon looked up from folding a long three-yard roll and smiled a welcome as Lucy entered with William close behind.

"Are you looking for me, daughter?" she asked, while Julia Houston, Lucy's best friend on the post, ran over, scissors in hand, to say:

"Do stay, Lucy, won't you, and we can work together."

"I'm afraid I can't this morning, Julia. I came only to tell Mother about the Leslies."

"When are they coming? Did Father hear from them?" asked Mrs. Gordon, pausing in her work.

"Yes, he sent word we were to expect them on the noon boat, and, oh, Mother, what do you suppose Marian will be like?" demanded Lucy, giving her mother's arm a squeeze in her eager curiosity.

"You'll know before long, dear, and no doubt you'll like her very much," said Mrs. Gordon, speaking without any great conviction in her voice, as she went on with her folding.

"Is your cousin going to stay with you all summer?" asked Julia, who had taken yards of selvage

cuttings from about her shoulders, and was showing William how to wind them into neat little balls.

"Yes, Marian is going to stay until her father comes back from California. Cousin Henry has to look after his lumber camps out there. The Government wants his wood for ships, so he has to leave in a hurry."

"Haven't you ever seen her, Lucy? Don't you know what she's like?" asked Julia curiously, tossing back her dark braids, as she looked up from William's laborious winding.

"Oh, yes, I saw her once about three years ago, when we were both twelve. She has always been delicate, and can't do a great deal, though Father says she is much better now. But she is awfully pretty," Lucy added, with a sudden enthusiasm her first words had lacked. "I think she'll like it here, don't you, Julia?"

"Of course," said Julia, who was sure any one would like army life.

"Come, Lucy, we had better go. We won't have more than time to meet the boat," said Mrs. Gordon, putting away her work. "Will you tie up the rest of these rolls, Mrs. Andrews?" she asked of the lady beside her, who agreed with a smile and added with a glance at Lucy:

"You'd better bring your cousin to parade tomorrow afternoon, Lucy. The whole regiment is

to march." Mrs. Andrews was the wife of the Colonel of the island's Infantry regiment.

"Oh, I will, Mrs. Andrews," said Lucy, leaning down to free William from the yards of strips he had got wound about his arms and hands in the course of his work.

"William—why do you always get so tied up with everything? Come, hurry! Mother's waiting. Good-bye, Julia."

Once outside the club, Mrs. Gordon said to her daughter, "We have fifteen minutes, so there's no need to walk fast in this heat. We can keep under the trees by the edge of the parade as far as the top of the hill."

Lucy was hardly listening. Her eyes were bent on the ground but suddenly she raised them to her mother and asked eagerly, "How do you honestly think we'll get along with Marian, Mother? I can't help wondering, because she's been so used to everything she wants. Perhaps she'll hate it here, and won't stay."

"Don't borrow trouble, dear," advised Mrs. Gordon, raising her parasol as they left the shade to cross the wide grassy space from Colonel's to General's Row. "Cousin Henry is so good himself, I am sure his little girl must have a great deal that is nice about her, and if she is a little selfish and trying, remember she has been ill a long time.

Cousin Henry has been a good friend to you children; you know he got Bob his appointment to West Point, and Father is devoted to him. We are only too glad to do a little for him now in return."

They had reached the General's house at the head of the little slope leading to the dock, and New York Harbor, gleaming in the morning sunlight, lay below them.

"There's the boat, just coming in," said Lucy, starting down the hill as the army ferry *General Hancock* drew slowly inshore, while a soldier on the dock let down the chains that held the gangway.

There were few passengers at this hour, most of the hundreds having government business coming earlier in the day, and only half a dozen people from the officers' cabin stepped ashore where Lucy and her mother and William stood waiting. The last to land was a tall, thin gentleman in a cool-looking pongee suit, with one arm around the shoulders of a slender girl about Lucy's size and dressed all in white.

"There they are, Mother. Hello, Cousin Henry! Hello, Marian!" cried Lucy, all her doubts forgotten at sight of Mr. Leslie's cheerful smile and Marian's pretty face.

Mrs. Gordon made haste to give them a cordial welcome, and as she bent to kiss Marian she asked

hopefully, "You'll like it here with us, won't you, dear? We're so glad to have you."

Marian gave a faint little smile as she answered, "Yes, Cousin Sally," and held out her hand to Lucy, while Mr. Leslie exclaimed with the friendly heartiness that made everybody like him:

"Why, Sally, Lucy, William! I never was so glad to see any one in my life! I wish I could stay here with Marian. This post must be a great place to see things, these days, and if I'm not mistaken, here's the Major himself coming to meet us."

He pointed toward the slope of the hill, down which a tall figure in summer olive-drab service uniform was swinging at a rapid walk.

"Why, so it is Father," said Lucy. "He didn't expect to be able to leave Headquarters in time to come, but he's managed it somehow."

Major Gordon, acting chief quartermaster of the post, had, since the declaration of war, had so much work to do that his leisure moments were exceedingly scarce, and his spare, bronzed face wore a look of fatigue. But he was well used to long and hard service, and his voice sounded hearty and cheerful as he greeted his cousin and looked with kindly questioning into Marian's face, with its pale-rose-leaf cheeks, wide violet eyes, and somewhat tremulous lips which looked as though pouting were not altogether a forgotten art to them.

"Well, little Marian, we're going to make an army girl of you before we get through—make you hate to leave us," he promised, giving a gentle pull to one of Marian's curls, which, tied with a ribbon behind her neck in a lovely mass of gold, Lucy had been admiring in silence while the others exchanged their greetings.

Major Gordon led the way on up the little slope with Mrs. Gordon and Mr. Leslie, leaving the children to follow, which they did very quietly, as Marian did not volunteer any remarks, and Lucy did not feel like beginning to ask questions yet. William, running along beside his sister, fixed a wide-eyed stare on his new cousin which made Lucy want to laugh as she began pointing out places of interest on the post, when they had reached the top of the slope.

"This is General's Row, Marian, where we live, and across the grass there is Colonel's Row, that other line of houses. All the officers on the General's staff live on this side of the island, and beyond the parade you can see the officers' quarters of the Infantry regiment stationed here. Those big sheds, way over beyond the houses, have just been put up for the recruits there is no room for. That big grassy stretch is the parade. The men have gone in to dinner now, but you'll see them drilling again this afternoon. They are all working ter-

ribly hard getting the new men into shape before they get orders for the front."

Lucy stopped, feeling she had never made such a long speech in her life, as Marian did not encourage her by asking any questions, but merely said, after a second's pause, "Yes, I suppose so," with a glance around her which Lucy felt sure was more one of politeness than real interest.

In another minute they had reached the Gordons' house in the line of square, yellow, pleasant looking officers' quarters, and entered the screened-in piazza. Mr. Leslie stopped in the doorway to poke his cane in the direction of an inquiring squirrel which was frisking about his feet with all the impudent tameness of a privileged pet.

"Isn't he a cunning little fellow, Marian?" he asked his daughter, who had come up and slipped her arm through his, with a little more life in her face as she returned her father's smile.

"Yes, he is," she nodded, laughing faintly, as the squirrel ran over her white shoe, leaving dusty little tracks across the toe.

"Luncheon is ready," announced Mrs. Gordon, coming out of the house. "We have it at half-past twelve on account of James. He has to get back so early to the office."

In spite of the warm day every one came in and sat down to eat very willingly, though Lucy watched

Marian, wondering how their somewhat simplified war-time fare would please her pampered taste. Evidently it was not very successful, for Marian hardly touched anything, and answered Mrs. Gordon's anxious inquiries by saying politely that she was not very hungry to-day. Mrs. Gordon was not at all satisfied to see her little guest make her lunch from a few string beans and half a dozen strawberries when her delicate cheeks and thin, little hands showed her decided need of nourishment, but she said nothing more for the present. Mr. Leslie, whose management of his ailing, motherless little daughter consisted in either coaxing her to obey him or letting her do what she liked, added a mild suggestion that she drink the glass of milk Mrs. Gordon provided, but did not gain his point. William drank the milk afterward, on top of a hearty meal.

After lunch Major Gordon took Mr. Leslie for a short tour of the post, which was to end at his office, from which Mr. Leslie would return to the house. Mrs. Gordon persuaded Marian to come up-stairs and lie down until her father's return, so as not to be too tired on her first day at Governor's Island. Marian was willing enough to rest for a while, as she was in the habit of doing. Lucy closed the door of the darkened room, from which Marian could hear the sharp commands of the company captains,

once more drilling their men on the parade, and ran down-stairs, secretly wondering how any one could want to go to sleep at this hour on a beautiful day, at a new army post she had had no chance to explore.

Through the doorway she caught sight of Julia Houston running across the grass with black braids flying, and went swiftly out to meet her.

"Did they come?" were Julia's first words, and Lucy plunged into an account of the new cousins, which, however, grew pretty meagre and evasive so far as Marian was concerned.

"Of course I don't really know her yet, though, Julia," she explained for her lack of enthusiasm. "She's lying down now, but you will see her later."

"Oh, poor little thing,—she's still ill, then?" asked warm-hearted Julia, ready to make allowances.

"Yes, I don't know just how much," said Lucy doubtfully.

"Well, listen to me a minute, Lucy." Julia took her friend's arm and drew her down on the steps of the Gordon house. "What I really came to ask you about was this." Her voice dropped a little. "Have you heard your father say anything about the Twenty-Eighth sailing for France this week, or that those drills they keep at every second of the day are their last on this side? Of course your

father would know, when he has charge of the supplies,—and I'm sure it's so," ended Julia, her eyes bright and earnest.

"Oh, Julia, you know how Father is about secrets,—especially lately. I wouldn't know one thing if everybody on the post were leaving tonight," said Lucy, her lips wavering to a smile, though her face was thoughtful. "How I wish I knew, though," she added, looking off toward the moving lines of men, dust-brown against the green. "Where did you hear it, anyway?"

"I didn't hear it, I just guessed it, because the Infantry officers are so queer and silent now, when you ask them questions. Mr. Alling was at our house last night, and he would hardly speak of the latest Infantry orders, and when they don't know what to expect themselves they talk and surmise about it as much as anybody. Besides, they are working so terribly hard,—in the regiment, I mean, not among the recruits. And hasn't your father been rushed to death, lately, without giving any particular reason?"

Lucy was silent, pondering, her father's tired face before her eyes. "I don't know, Julia," she said at last. "I wish we did. I'll ask Father to tell me,—wouldn't any secret be safe with us? But he won't."

Julia got up, staring over the parade with frown-

ing brows. The mysterious secrecy of these first sailings of American troops for the far-off battle front, lest the watchful submarines learn more accurate news of their coming than they already picked up by unknown means, was to the eager, loyal children of the post a very thrilling problem of uncertainty. Twice already had a regiment, newly arrived at the island for an uncertain stay, slipped away in the darkness or the dawn to its transports, and each time, thanks to the silent tongues and the battle-ships waiting to convoy them, they had reached the other side in safety. And now was the home regiment to follow?

"I suppose we might just as well stop racking our brains," Julia said at last, putting aside her perplexed thoughts with her usual impulsiveness. "Come to the Red Cross to-morrow morning, Lucy? We can do that much, anyhow."

"Yes, I'll come," responded Lucy, still thoughtful. Then she added with sudden earnestness, "But I'm not going to let the Twenty-Eighth disappear as the others did! If that regiment sails this week, Julia, I'm going to be there to see it off."

CHAPTER II

PARADE

The Red Cross rooms were crowded, but Lucy and Julia had managed to find a corner at Mrs. Houston's table.

"Twenty-three, twenty-four," counted Lucy, turning over the neat little piles of gauze squares on the table. "Oh, Julia, how can you do them so fast? I've worked my head off and only made twenty, and now I have to go home before I can brace up and beat you."

Julia laughed, and Mrs. Houston, who sat across from the two girls, said critically, "I think yours are done the better of the two, Lucy, so don't be too discouraged. Julia always puts speed ahead of everything."

"Well, that's the most important thing in this Red Cross work," said Julia in self-defense. "All the doctors tell you that plenty of dressings pretty well done are more useful after a battle than a few of them made to perfection. I tell you what, Lucy, bring the rest of your pile of gauze along and come

home to lunch with me. I still have this much left, too, and we can finish it right afterward."

Julia held up a thin pile of pieces, but Lucy shook her head regretfully.

"Can't, Julia. I must go back to Marian. She's a little homesick, I think. She seemed so after her father left yesterday, though she didn't say much."

"Oh, then, can't you play tennis this afternoon, either?" demanded Julia, feeling that her friend was making unnecessary sacrifices.

"No, I'll stay with her and see you at parade. I don't mind. Think how we'd feel, Julia, if we were dropped down into some strange city, where nobody knew or cared anything about the army."

Julia laughed, but she said thoughtfully, "We'll have to make her like it here, Lucy. I know we can. Well, be sure to come out later."

"Oh, yes," nodded Lucy, putting on her hat over her tumbled hair. "May I take these home to finish, Mrs. Houston? I'll bring them back to-morrow. Good-bye."

Leaning all the morning over a work-table seemed to make Lucy hungrier than even outdoor exercise, and at luncheon, to which they sat down promptly when Major Gordon came in, she was too pre-occupied to notice Marian very much. Mrs. Gordon had been helping Marian arrange things in her

room and unpack her clothes, and having had quite a pleasant little talk with her, and decided that she was not terribly homesick, was disappointed to see her take hardly any more interest in her food than she had the day before.

"Don't you like shepherd's pie?" she asked as Marian refused the dish passed to her. "Why don't you try a little?"

Marian silently obeyed by taking a spoonful, which lay quite untasted on her plate while she munched a little bread and butter.

"But you aren't eating it, dear," insisted Mrs. Gordon. "Don't you find it good?"

"Oh, yes, Cousin Sally," answered Marian politely. "It's very nice indeed, but I'm not hungry."

Marian's careful bringing up by a French governess, surrounded with every advantage of foreign travel and good associations, had given her an outward semblance of good manners, which had, however, no real obedience or docility behind them. Mrs. Gordon said nothing more for the moment, and changed the subject by asking William where he had been on his walk around the island with Elizabeth, after they had taken some papers and magazines to the soldiers in the post hospital. But after luncheon when Lucy and Marian had gone out on the piazza and sat down at a table to finish

the pile of gauze, Mrs. Gordon took out her sewing and seated herself near them.

"It isn't very hard, Marian," Lucy began, responding promptly to a faint suggestion made by Marian before luncheon that she would like to learn to make dressings, and spreading out a piece of gauze after a critical glance at her fingers. "Take this silver knife,—I brought out two,—to pat it smooth with. Now fold it over, so, and fold it the other way,—twice. Then smooth it flat and it's all done. I'll show you again."

"Marian," said Mrs. Gordon, looking at her little cousin's delicate profile that looked so pretty as she bent over her work, "I am going to speak to you right now about the way you sit at our table and eat nothing. Why, my child, I can't let you spend the summer here and make no better meals than you have been doing. You need your food as much as Lucy does,—more, because you have your health to build up."

Marian had turned her head to listen, and as Mrs. Gordon paused she said, doubtfully, "Why, I'm not very hungry, Cousin Sally, except once in a while."

"That's because your appetite has got used to being coaxed and encouraged while you were ill. I dare say there are a few things that you particularly like and are willing to eat. But I mean you must learn to help it along for yourself by try-

ing to eat what a girl your age ought to. I'm sure you want to do everything you can to get well soon, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, I do," said Marian quickly, while her brows met in an uncertain frown, as though her ill-health were a tiresome burden which she would gladly be rid of, but to which she had grown so accustomed that it now seemed impossible to throw it aside.

"I know a little exercise would make you hungrier," Mrs. Gordon went on, "and while riding would be too violent on our army horses, even if the airplanes didn't frighten them too much to make it safe, I think a little tennis wouldn't hurt. Oh, Marian, how beautifully you've done that!"

Lucy had held out for her mother's inspection a smooth, almost perfect little square which Marian had just added to the pile. Mrs. Gordon, always more willing to praise than to find fault, was delighted at her success in the delicate art of making neat compresses, and said so, enthusiastically.

Marian smiled with pleasure, and bent over her work again, her bright hair falling about her shoulders and her thin, little fingers busy, while Lucy, glancing up, thought to herself as she patted and poked, "She *is* pretty, and if I could just shake her and wake her up, and get her acting like a regular girl, I'd like her."

"Lucy," said Mrs. Gordon, looking at her daughter's completed pile, "I want you to walk over to Headquarters now, and bring back a letter Father wants to show me."

"All right, Mother. Will you come, Marian?" asked Lucy, getting up with a jump from her prolonged quiet.

"No, I guess not," Marian answered, hesitating for a second over her refusal, but deciding in favor of what required least effort.

"I'll take William," said Lucy, going out on the grass, where the little boy was sitting cross-legged, carefully shelling peanuts for an impatient squirrel who would much rather have done it for himself.

"O-oh, Lucy, isn't he a pig!" asked William, catching sight of his sister as he began ruefully sucking his thumb where the greedy squirrel had nipped it, and ungratefully darted off over his shoulder with a flirt of his big tail in William's face.

"You ought to let him have it whole. He can shell harder things than we can. Come on, hurry," said Lucy, holding out her hand. "We're going over to Father's office a minute."

They cut across the grass, and in five minutes reached the long, yellow brick building near the head of the slope above the dock, William's little bare legs twinkling along as fast as he could work

them beside his sister's swift pace, for Lucy always seemed to be making up for lost time.

Entering the building, she opened a door off the corridor into a room where a soldier sat over a desk covered with papers.

"Good-afternoon, Sergeant Cameron," she said, as the "non-com" sprang up and stood at attention, except for the friendly smile on his face. "Is Father in his office?"

The Sergeant opened the door of the inner room and ushered them through. "The Major has gone into Colonel Horton's office for a moment, but he will be back directly. Take a seat, Miss Lucy. No, I can't play now, little Major." This was added in an undertone to William, whose resemblance to his father had earned him this title, and who could not understand why his friend the Sergeant was so severe at work when he was so very friendly at other times.

Lucy dropped into the revolving chair in front of her father's desk and glanced idly at the papers spread out before her. They were long columns of figures at one side of the sheet, with before them lists of articles of every description for the food and equipment of Uncle Sam's soldiers, into the hundreds of thousands of barrels and boxes and dozens and hundredweights. Half guiltily, Lucy turned away her eyes, for her quick fancy brought before

her on the instant the companies of marching men in close-ranked files that those supplies were meant to accompany. Julia's eager questions came back with a rush of swift conviction.

"The Twenty-Eighth is going this week, surely," she thought to herself, and struggled with her conscience whether to look again to see if the papers gave any definite names or dates, when the door opened and a young infantry officer came in, with a letter in his hand, and said, with a quick jolly smile:

"Hello, Lucy, how are you? Your father sent me to bring you this letter. He had it with him, and he can't come back right away. At least, he told me to give it to Sergeant Cameron, but I thought I'd like to see how you and William were."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Harding," said Lucy, taking the letter from his hand, the eager questions which she had been asking herself a moment before now trembling on her lips. The Lieutenant was a great friend of the Gordon family, and Lucy felt emboldened to try her luck.

"Mr. Harding," she burst out, "do you,—you don't think I am a chatterbox,—I mean that I tell everything I know,—do you?"

The young officer laughed, though he looked his surprise, and his brown eyes twinkled as he said,

"Why, not quite so bad as that, Lucy. I never said so, anyway, so why the row with me?"

"Oh, I know you didn't say so," Lucy assured him hastily. "I'm only asking you if you don't think I can keep a secret; because I know I can." Then before Mr. Harding could answer she persisted, "Is the Twenty-Eighth going over this week? Won't you tell me?"

Mr. Harding smiled at the flushed and eager face lifted to his, but the smile was a thoughtful one as he answered, "You must think the Colonel takes me into his confidence. What put that idea into your head?"

"Oh,—lots of things," said Lucy impatiently. "You won't tell me, will you?"

"Supposing that I knew something to tell, and the orders were secret—would you expect me to?"

Lucy's eyes lighted up and she smiled at her friend with a sudden satisfaction. "No, I wouldn't, and I'm a silly goose to bother you, but I wanted dreadfully to know, and no news will ever be spread through me or Julia."

"Well, I don't see any news to spread," remarked Mr. Harding, opening the door, "except that I shall have a warm reception from the Major if I stay palavering with you and William any longer."

"Thanks for coming," said Lucy as they passed

through the outer room, where Sergeant Cameron stood rigidly at attention, only this time with no smile on his immovable face, as the young officer passed him to bid good-bye to the Gordons at the door.

"It's funny," Lucy thought on the way home, when William had run on ahead, finding his sister too quiet to be good company. "We want so much to do a lot to help, and we can do so little. Now I know they are surely going, for Mr. Harding would have denied it otherwise,—but I don't know just when."

An airplane from the aviation field at the far end of the island passed noisily overhead, and Lucy watched it wistfully, as it flew off toward Sandy Hook through the clear sky, with that mysterious longing to share in great adventures that sometimes stirs every normal fourteen-year-old heart. At last she gave a sigh and came down to earth, having bumped rather hard into some of the bushes by the General's gate-post, and made that gentleman smile curiously at her as he came out of his door.

"I'll go home and see how Marian is," she said, forgetting her puzzled thoughts and starting to run. "I guess that's all I'm good for."

Back at the house, Lucy found the piazza deserted and went inside and out to the kitchen, where the cook, who was Elizabeth's husband, Karl, told her

that Mrs. Gordon had gone to take some jelly to Sergeant Cameron's wife, who had been ill several days.

"The little sick girl is up-stairs, I think, Miss Lucy. She not go with your mother, I know."

Lucy ran up-stairs and through her own room into Marian's. "Oh, here you are," she panted, breathless. "I've been wondering where you were. Aren't you coming out to parade?"

"Yes, I'm getting dressed now," said Marian, who was tying her curls with a blue ribbon as she stood before the glass in her petticoat. "Will you button my dress for me, Lucy? I was waiting for Elizabeth to come down from her room."

"Of course I will," said Lucy, taking the fine white frock laid on the bed and slipping it carefully over Marian's thin little shoulders. "Oh, Marian, you do look lovely!" she could not help exclaiming when she had finished the row of tiny buttons. "What a perfectly darling dress that is."

"Oh, no," said Marian, laughing at her cousin's burst of enthusiasm, for she was too used to having numberless pretty clothes, which her father bought to coax her into an interest in going about, to think much of them. But Lucy, wandering over to the closet where a dozen more dresses hung, suddenly became painfully aware of her own mussed-looking

middy blouse and skirt, and of the hair blown about her face.

"I'll get dressed myself in a jiffy, Marian," she said, darting into her own room, where she performed the sometimes neglected function of dressing for the afternoon with more than usual care. When she came out ten minutes later and joined Marian down-stairs, her soft fair hair was smoothly brushed and tied, and she wore a fresh summer dress free from the ravages made by squirrels' feet.

"Now, we'll go," she said, leading the way outdoors, as from the parade behind Colonel's Row the band of the Twenty-Eighth struck up a lively march.

Over the broad expanse of green, as Lucy and Marian drew near, twelve companies were marching in close-ranked lines, for the whole regiment was on parade, and a crowd of people were gathered about the iron benches behind the reviewing officer. The women of the Twenty-Eighth, as well as many of the General Staff officers with their families, were watching the khaki-colored ranks of well-drilled men as they swung about in response to the orders heard clearly above the music, and formed into a long, double line facing the Colonel. As the music stopped, Lucy's eyes turned from the regiment to the faces of the people about her, and in their quiet voices and serious eyes she felt that she read her

own and Julia's thoughts, of the few days left for the Twenty-Eighth to remain in peaceful America.

Julia had found Lucy and Marian at once, and in a minute the three were joined by General Matthews' daughter, Anne, who was just home from a visit and so glad to be back that her jolly, rosy-cheeked face was aglow with smiles and she gave Marian's little hand a hearty shake of welcome. Julia had seen but a glimpse of Lucy's cousin the day before, and now she was prepared to make a thorough acquaintance.

"I'm so glad you feel better, Marian," she said in a friendly way. "There's such a lot to see here now, I know you want to be able to do everything."

No one could look at Marian's lovely face, framed in its pale gold curls, and at her delicate, dainty little self without a touch of pity and liking, and Julia decided in her impulsive mind that if Lucy's cousin was to remain at the Gordons' all summer, the only thing to do was to let her share in all their plans and treat her as a friend.

"Did Lucy tell you what we think, Marian?" she asked when the three were standing again by themselves, Marian's wide eyes fixed on the lines of soldiers with a keener interest than she had yet shown. "We think," Julia lowered her voice, "the Twenty-Eighth is going before this week is over."

"Where?" asked Marian quickly, a sudden look

of animation in her face, as she turned at Julia's words. As though in answer to her question the band burst into life and the regiment began to march.

"Over there . . .
Over there . . ."

The words sang themselves into the music as the lines swung again into companies before the Colonel's silent watching figure.

"For the Yanks are coming . . .
The Yanks are coming . . .
And we won't come back
'Til it's over,—over there!"

Marian's lips formed the stirring words and her eyes, expressive and intelligent enough when her interest was aroused, sparkled with swift understanding.

"But, Lucy," she asked with a new wonder, "why aren't you sure? Is it a secret to every one outside of the regiment?"

"Not quite,—some of the staff officers have to know. But to us it is, or rather supposed to be, for I'm just as sure of it as though Colonel Andrews had turned around and told me his orders had come." Lucy spoke with serious face and lowered voice.

"Not even the enlisted men know the exact day until within twenty-four hours of it," added Julia.

"The officers only tell them to get ready. Of course, there's nothing like safety first, but who is there on this post to be afraid of? Not many enemies, I'm sure."

"Why, the Gordons have two Germans right in their house," said Marian, looking at Lucy.

"Elizabeth and Karl?" asked Lucy, astonished. "Why,—of course they *are* Germans by birth, but they've lived years in this country. Karl has been Father's servant since the Spanish war, Marian, and Elizabeth thinks we are her own children sometimes, I believe. No matter if they leave us when we move to a new post they always turn up again and come back. Oh, I know they're all right."

"We can't suspect every German we know," agreed Julia. "Look at the Schneiders, who keep the store on the dock. They were so afraid of being told to go when war was declared, but General Matthews decided they might stay. Mrs. Schneider cried on Mother's shoulder when she heard it, and said she didn't know what would have become of them if their business had been ruined."

"We must go home," said Lucy, as the last of the regiment marched away and the crowd of people began to disperse. "Mother told me not to keep Marian out long, and the sun is setting as fast as it can. To-morrow is the first of August. Just think, Julia, how soon Bob graduates! A whole

year earlier than he ought." Lucy bit her lip a second and turned to meet her friend's bright, understanding eyes. "I can't feel very glad about it. It's Bob I think of when we watch the Twenty-Eighth get ready for 'over there.'"

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTERY OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH

Lucy and Julia were sitting on the Gordons' piazza floor filling comfort kits, while Marian and William sorted out pencils and shoe-laces and writing paper and safety-pins. All four had stopped working just now to speak to Mr. Harding, who came out of the house and sat down by them while he waited for Major Gordon, who had returned from his office only to start out again.

"Who are these for?" asked the young officer, looking at the neat little cloth bags, half-filled with soldiers' luxuries.

"I don't know exactly, but the Red Cross does," said Lucy, tossing back her ruffled hair. "I think all we have sent lately are for the New York troops who join the Rainbow Division."

"They look pretty nice," commented Mr. Harding. "If I had a sister nearer than the Philippines I suppose she'd make me one. I might go across before long myself."

"Oh, of course you can have one!" cried Lucy delighted. "Let's keep out that last one, Julia, and make it up separately."

"How soon do you want it?" asked wily Julia, hoping to hear some news.

Mr. Harding laughed and glanced at the watch on his wrist. "It's half-past four now,—I'll give you till six o'clock."

"Want chocolate in yours?" asked William, looking affectionately at the shiny brown packages waiting to be distributed among the kits.

"Don't I though! Sort of like to join the army yourself, wouldn't you?" inquired Mr. Harding, picking up the little boy and swinging him over his shoulders until he squealed with excitement. "Look out for your feet, now. There wouldn't be much left of your cousin if you came down on top of her," cautioned the young man, setting William down at a safe distance from Marian's golden head.

"I wouldn't hurt her,—she's sick," said William with kindly superiority, catching his breath after his rapid flight through the air.

"I'm not," said Marian quickly, her blue eyes lighting up, but at sight of William's funny little air of condescension her lips wavered to a smile, and for a moment she forgot herself and joined in the others' laughter.

"Marian's almost well now, William," said Lucy, to smooth things over, and Mr. Harding, getting up at sound of a footstep inside the hall, asked:

"Can you believe Bob will come home an officer in two weeks, Lucy? I can't—he seems such a kid."

"Doesn't he?" said Lucy, pausing thoughtfully in her work, her brother's tall figure and boyish face before her eyes. "Well, I wish I were an officer."

"Lucy," said Mr. Harding, "I think we'll have to make you Captain by courtesy of the Twenty-Eighth. Would you like that?"

"Would I!" exclaimed Lucy, her eyes shining. "Oh, you are joking."

"Never more serious in my life," said Mr. Harding, his eyes twinkling, as he came to a stiff salute. "Captain Lucy!" And Lucy, a little breathless and self-conscious, returned it amid the pleased exclamations of the two girls and William.

"Here's the Major, so good-bye." Mr. Harding waved his cap with a smile and turned to join the older officer who came out of the house, papers in hand.

"All good little war workers, aren't you?" remarked Major Gordon, feeling for his glasses. "Come along, Harding," and the two set off briskly down the walk.

Lucy, aglow with the realization of the honor which had just been conferred upon her, scrambled over to pick up the kit reserved for her friend,

when through the window opening on the piazza appeared Karl's bushy, black head and heated face.

"Your mother not back yet from town, Miss Lucy?" he inquired.

"No, she isn't, Karl. What's the matter?"

"I not disturb the Major," explained Karl volubly, "but without an order I can nothing from the dispensary get, and Elizabeth feel very bad."

"Oh, does her tooth ache again? I'm awfully sorry," cried Lucy, jumping to her feet. "I'll go and speak to her, Karl."

Lucy ran indoors and up to the little dormer-windowed rooms on the third floor. Elizabeth lay on her bed, her aching cheek buried in the pillow and a heavy down-quilt spread over her, notwithstanding the day's sultry heat. In spite of her pain she managed a faint smile and a murmur of welcome as Lucy dropped to her knees beside her.

"It's too bad, Elizabeth! Just tell me what to get, and I'll go right over to the dispensary. Perhaps I'd better ask the steward there what is best for a toothache. He'll know. But first, I'll bring you Mother's hot-water bottle."

"Oh, Miss Lucy, it is good so!" sighed poor Elizabeth gratefully, when the hot bag was pressed against her burning face. "I never have such an ache,—never."

"Well, stay right there while I go after something for it," said Lucy hopefully, and she made for the stairs, down which she ran at headlong speed.

"Is Elizabeth very sick, Lucy?" asked William, running anxiously up when his sister reappeared on the piazza. The kind, affectionate German woman was a friend to all the Gordon household.

"No, William, but I'm going over to the dispensary after something for her. I'll be right back, Julia," she added, turning to the two girls who were tying up the last of the comfort kits.

"All right. Don't rush around so fast, Lucy. You'll blow up some day," remarked Julia, peaceably fastening a tape. "I have to go home anyhow."

Ten minutes later Lucy returned armed with a little bottle and a camel's-hair brush, and met her mother in front of the steps.

"Oh, I'm so glad you are back, Mother. Do come up and see Elizabeth when you get your things off, won't you?" and Lucy drew her mother into the house, relieved at the arrival of efficient help and advice.

Mrs. Gordon managed before long to make Elizabeth as comfortable as an aching tooth would allow, and sent Lucy down to fill some of the gaps in the housekeeping arrangements.

"I'll finish with Mr. Harding's kit in a few minutes," Lucy said to Marian while she was giving William his supper, "and Mat can take it over to the Bachelor's Quarters."

Mat was the Gordons' good-conduct or "parole" man, one of whom is allotted to the service of each officer, from the military prison on the post, that they may earn a little money before their term expires.

"I'm going to put some postal cards in the kit, addressed to me," Lucy added, speaking a little doubtfully. "Perhaps he'll laugh, but we're all so anxious to hear news after they go, and it will be easy enough for him to mail one."

"I think it's a fine idea," said Marian, leaning her elbows on the dining-room table while she listened with more animation in her pretty face than was often seen there. "Wouldn't it be queer to have them come back to you from nobody knows where?"

"You could tell by the postmark," remarked William practically, between spoonfuls of crackers and milk.

Lucy laughed, but she whispered to Marian, "Let's not talk about it any more, now," remembering William's gaping ears and her own assurance to Mr. Harding that her surmises about their departure would go no further.

Mrs. Gordon stayed for some time longer with Elizabeth, and when she did come down she heard Lucy moving about inside her room, and stopped at the door.

"Here's a letter I had from Bob, Lucy. I know you wish to read it. I met the postman on the boat."

"Oh, thanks, Mother," said Lucy, letting her hair, which she held ready to tie, fall back over her shoulders as she took the envelope eagerly from Mrs. Gordon's hand. She snatched out the letter and sank down on her sofa by the window to read in comfort.

"Of course you're all coming up for graduation," Bob wrote. "Don't forget how soon it is,—I can't remember it myself. If you don't hear from me before then it's only because we have so much to do that no day is half long enough. In these few months since war was declared they have been trying to put most of next year's work into our heads, as well as some of the new things the Allies have learned about fighting. Besides all that, I have helped edit this year's 'Howitzer.' We've combined the real class of '17 and our own class into one book, with their consent,—since we graduate only four months after they do. It's going to be a corker, too. I had my picture taken last week for

it, and will send you one, if Lucy won't still say my hair looks like a scrubbing-brush.

"I'm awfully glad to get your letters, even if I don't write, and I'm crazy to see you all again. We spend most of the time we have, which isn't much, wondering what we'll do after graduation, and every one has his own little idea of what will happen to him,—nothing dull for any of us, I expect. Only we don't know anything for certain except the good news that we graduate in two weeks, so we're feeling like the fellow in the song who says, 'Oh, joy! Oh, boy! Where do we go from here?'

"I know this much, anyway, that I'm coming to Governor's Island before I go anywhere else, and see everybody and take it mighty easy for a day or two, if I never can again. We are working here, believe me! I was going to say working like dogs, but the only dog around barracks lies in the sun all day and catches flies while we're wearing ourselves to skin and bone. We call him General. Don't take that about the work seriously, Mother. I never felt better in my life. Tell Lucy there's plenty of time for another box of fudge to get here before we leave. Yes, I noticed what she said about her commission in the Twenty-Eighth. Tell her she can't boss me, though.

"Write me just when to expect you up, and

everybody come,—you and Dad and Lucy and William, and Marian whether she wants to or not.

"Good-bye and lots of love from

"Bob."

Lucy read the letter through twice, and then sat thoughtfully motionless with it in her hand, while from the parade came the sound of music as some of the companies drilling late marched back to barracks.

This home-coming of Bob's, so brief and uncertain, to last perhaps twenty-four hours,—a week at most, her father thought,—how different it was from the graduation leave she and Bob had planned together. The one that would have come next summer and given him three long months to spend at home before he joined his regiment. Lucy loved to make plans, and she had looked forward to her brother's graduation leave since his second class furlough a year ago. She had decided that she would be old enough to go nearly everywhere Bob went, by that time, for she would be fifteen the same month that Bob would be twenty-one. And now how far off all those things seemed, and how different from reality. Where would Bob be, anyway, a year from now, if the war still went on?

She sat up from among the pillows and folded

the letter carefully. Not to borrow trouble is a motto often needed in a soldier's household, and none of the Gordons indulged for long in gloomy ponderings. It was growing dark, too, and Major Gordon was coming up the walk, so dinner would soon be ready.

Lucy did not shake off her thoughtfulness, though, all the evening, even while she discussed the coming trip to West Point cheerfully enough with the rest of the family, and persuaded Marian that she would enjoy herself enough to make up for being tired by the unusual effort. But after she and Marian were in bed she lay long awake, until Taps sounded sweet and clear from the parade and all the house was quiet. Then she did fall gradually asleep, and off into long dreams that lasted until a step outside in the hall made her start suddenly awake. The footsteps turned toward the upper stairs and Lucy, wide awake now, jumped up and ran to the door.

"Is it you, Elizabeth?" she asked softly, peering into the darkness. "What's the matter? Are you worse?"

A dim little figure in a flannel wrapper approached her and Elizabeth's voice whispered, "No, no, Miss Lucy, much better, but I go down for little hot water. I feel good so, with the warm poultice on my face."

"Can't I do anything? I'd like to," Lucy offered, but Elizabeth whispered:

"No, thank you. It was too bad I wake you up. Go back to bed now." She gave her a little push inside the door, and Lucy got into bed, feeling terribly sleepy. But as she turned over the pillow and closed her eyes, all at once she raised her head and stopped breathing to listen.

Outside, somewhere—what was happening, anyway? Something more than the measured tread of the sentry walking slowly along the line. The dim, vague sound was like hundreds of footsteps, muffled and uneven, but moving steadily along.

With fast-beating heart Lucy got up once more, and, raising a screen, put her head out of the window to listen. Beyond the lighted walk the shadowy trees stirred a little in the night air, but nothing else took shape to form the substance of those footsteps that, still swelling in numbers, sounded faintly but unmistakably on Lucy's ears.

"They're behind the Headquarters Building—on the road to the dock," she guessed, wildly trying to collect her thoughts. Then with a sudden decision she quietly lowered the screen and, running softly across the room, began to dress herself hurriedly in the darkness.

Mrs. Gordon's room was at the other end of the

hall, and all Lucy's care had been not to wake Marian, for the door between their two rooms was wide open. But as she struggled with refractory shoe-strings she remembered Marian's eager interest of the last few days, and her questions which, while their ignorance of army matters had made Lucy and Julia laugh, were still a welcome change from her weary indifference.

"I don't care if she is delicate," thought Lucy, defiantly. "I don't believe it will hurt her one bit, and I can't be so mean as not to tell her."

With one shoe on she tiptoed into Marian's room and dropped down on the bed beside her. "Marian!" she whispered, giving her cousin's slender little shoulder a vigorous shake that made her start upright in bed with a frightened gasp.

"Oh, who is it? Lucy, is it you?"

"Yes, and the Twenty-Eighth is leaving! Right now,—I hear them marching by. I'm going down to see them off, and you can come if you like,—only I don't think you'd better."

Lucy's caution came rather late to be of much use. Marian was out of bed in a second, and getting into her clothes with a remarkable disregard for convenience and comfort.

"Just tie your hair with a ribbon;—I did," urged Lucy, finishing her shoes, "and hurry, Marian! What if we should miss them!"

"I am hurrying," said Marian.

Lucy felt suddenly enraged at her calmness, and almost wished she had let her sleep on undisturbed. But very soon Marian joined her fully dressed, and as the clock below struck three, the two girls tip-toed down-stairs and out by the unlocked front door.

An army post at night is unlike any other place in the feeling of complete security it gives. This feeling leads the officers to leave their doors and windows always unfastened, and to allow their children to wander freely about on summer evenings. The post is a little world carefully administered, where every inhabitant is known and has his place, and the soldiers are the time-honored friends of the army children.

Lucy looked over toward the Houstons' as she and Marian hurried along, wishing with all her might that Julia were awake. There was no moon, but the sky was bright with stars and the air clear and warm, though Marian shivered with nervous excitement, and her arm shook against the one Lucy had thrust through hers.

At the head of the slope above the dock the two stopped, panting, with a murmur of voices and the never-ending sound of moving feet still in their ears, and stared motionless at the scene revealed dimly below. The whole regiment was assembled

on the dock in the starlight; a moving mass of men, at work over piles of bags and boxes, or standing at ease by their rifles, their outlines bulky with the burden of their field equipment, while alongside the dock three big government tugs were waiting with steam up.

For a moment the two girls stood looking down at the men who were going away in darkness and silence to their duty, with no inspiring music for them, nor wives and children to wave them good-bye, for the women of the Twenty-Eighth had obeyed Colonel Andrew's request that the partings be at home, to let the regiment get off quickly and in greater safety. But in another minute Lucy pulled Marian after her down the walk, until they were on the fringe of the great crowd of soldiers. One or two looked around at them in surprise, but Lucy hardly saw or heeded them. Her heart was swelling with generous emotion, and her throat ached intolerably with longing to do something,—anything,—for the aid and comfort, or at least the encouragement of these men of the Twenty-Eighth, so soon to share in the Allies' pain and glory.

But already the gangways were laid and the men filing down them, while others jumped from the wharf upon the decks. They moved without loud commands, as they had marched from barracks, and only a few low voices broke the stillness of the

early morning, that sleepy time when even the harbor is almost clear of shipping, and the big city nearly dark.

Suddenly Lucy caught sight of a tall figure standing at the bow of the nearest boat, and without a word she made a rush in its direction, Marian following blindly. Already curious glances were peering at the two children out of the dimness, and Lucy's heart beat with fear that they might be obliged to go before she could bid even this friend good-bye. She stole up cautiously and laid a timid hand on the young officer's arm.

"Mr. Harding," she faltered, "haven't you time to tell us good-bye?"

"Why, Captain Lucy, what on earth,—well, I might have known you'd guess it somehow!" exclaimed the young man, startled but laughing softly as he gave Lucy's hand a hearty clasp. "And Marian got up too? Well, you're a couple of imps, but all the same I can't help being glad to see you. And many, many thanks for the comfort kit. I never thought you'd really get it there in time."

"I put in some postal cards addressed to me," Lucy whispered. "Won't you please send back one when you get over there?"

"Of course I will, Lucy," he promised, glancing round at the boat, which was now filled to overflowing with men and equipment, and ready to put

off. "I have to go now, but you'll never know how good it seemed to have some 'family' here at the last minute, and I won't forget to write."

He put one arm about Lucy's shoulders and gave her an affectionate hug, while Lucy, feeling the burden of the war descending heavily upon her, swallowed hard and trusted to the darkness to hide the tears in her eyes. "I'll take care of Bob when he comes," he said in her ear. He gave her a salute, then with a laugh waved his cap for a last good-bye, and jumped on board at the heels of the battalion.

When the boats had moved off through the shadows Lucy and Marian stole quickly home and crept back into the house like timid burglars.

Once up-stairs, Lucy, suddenly grown anxious and remorseful about Marian, helped her cousin to undress and get back to bed, devoutly hoping that no harm would result from her impulsive act. Marian was very silent, but when Lucy turned at last to leave her she whispered from the pillow, "Lucy, I'm glad you waked me," and Lucy, stopping to answer her, felt it a plentiful return for her own kindness to know that Marian had forgotten everything else just then but the wonderful scene they had watched together.

In spite of heavy and conflicting thoughts and fears Lucy soon went to sleep and only woke in

bright sunlight as the clock was striking seven. She sat up and rubbed her sleepy eyes, with a sudden weight on her conscience and a desire to get rid of it as quickly as possible.

Her kimono and slippers were within reach, and she put them on and ran down the hall into her mother's room.

"Why, good-morning, Lucy; you're an early bird. I was just going to get up myself," said Mrs. Gordon, propping her head up on her elbow as Lucy plumped down beside her on the bed and gave her a good-morning kiss.

"Well, I have something to tell you, and I thought the sooner the better," explained Lucy. "Perhaps you won't like it much, Mother, but I hope you won't mind."

"Why, what in the world is it?" asked Mrs. Gordon, looking puzzled.

"The Twenty-Eighth sailed last night," said Lucy, talking very fast. "You know Father wouldn't tell us a word, but we guessed it somehow. And last night Elizabeth woke me up walking around, and while I was awake I heard the men marching and I woke Marian, and we went down to the dock and saw them off."

"Lucy,—the Twenty-Eighth gone! and you went down in the night?" cried Mrs. Gordon, astonished.

"I know, Mother, I ought to have asked you, but I was so awfully afraid they would get away before you or Father could decide to let me go."

"But Marian,—you took her too?"

"It didn't hurt her one bit, Mother. She is sound asleep now,—I just looked at her on my way out. And she wanted so to see them go. We had talked about it—she and Julia and I. Poor Julia didn't see them after all, so I thought Marian might. And, Mother, we were the only ones to guess,—outside of the people in the regiment, I mean,—and we saw Mr. Harding and told him good-bye."

"Why, Lucy, I'm so surprised I don't know whether I am angry or not. I know you didn't mean any harm, but I don't like your stealing out like that. To think that the Twenty-Eighth has gone so soon! Your father didn't say a word about it."

"I'll promise not to go again without telling you, so won't you forgive me this time?" Lucy pleaded. "And, Mother, Mr. Harding said he would write us from the other side, and he promised that when Bob goes over he will take care of him."

"If he only could," sighed Mrs. Gordon, her thoughts too full for further reproof of her independent little daughter. "Dick Harding was here only yesterday,—I'm glad you did see him to tell

him good-bye. He must have wondered how you got there."

"Hardly anybody saw us. We were there only a little while, and they were all so busy. I just had to see them go, Mother, and you would have felt the same way if you had heard them marching in the night."

"Well, dear, I do know how you felt, and I forgive you, but let's pray it doesn't do Marian any harm. Now let me get up, for I want to see how Elizabeth is this morning. There must be many on the post who didn't sleep much last night!"

Lucy got off the bed, and standing thoughtfully by the window, looked over toward the Infantry quarters beyond the parade and watched an early airplane skimming over them.

Marian did not come down to breakfast, and at the table nothing was said about the departure of the regiment, for Major Gordon discouraged any war talk or discussion of army matters at meal time. But afterward Mrs. Gordon followed her husband into his study, while Lucy was speaking to Elizabeth.

"James, to think I never knew of the Twenty-Eighth leaving," she said reproachfully.

Major Gordon stopped lighting his pipe to ask in surprise, "What, have you heard it already?"

"Earlier than this. Do you know Lucy and

Marian went down to the dock to see them off? They heard them marching by and guessed who it was."

"Great Cæsar!" exclaimed Major Gordon, who was a stickler for regular hours and undisturbed sleep for children, and who was more annoyed by Lucy's escapade than appreciative of her patriotism. "What's got into that child, anyway?"

"Oh, she just wanted to see them," said Mrs. Gordon smiling. "I don't think there was any great harm done. But of course she ought to have asked me."

"She took Marian along, you say? Are you sure she's none the worse for it?"

"It didn't hurt her a speck, Father," said Lucy, who had stolen in and up to her father's side. "Please don't be angry, because Mother has forgiven me and it was such a wonderful thing to see. Marian is sleeping like a top. I'm going to wake her up in a minute."

Major Gordon blew some short puffs of smoke from his pipe and shook his head at Lucy, but he ended by laying a hand on her shoulder and saying relentingly, "Well, we'll have to let it go this time, because I must be off, and if your mother and you don't tell me now what time you will be able to start for West Point next week I'll be too late in telegraphing the hotel."

CHAPTER IV

LIEUTENANT BOB

It didn't seem possible to Lucy that Bob's graduation was but a few days off, and the long four-year course, that had seemed never ending, shortened to three years and already over. And before she had got used to thinking about it the day before graduation had come and they were on their way.

The island had seemed almost deserted without the men of the Twenty-Eighth, though some companies of Infantry from Fort Slocum had already arrived to replace them, together with a new lot of recruits in such great numbers that the temporary barracks on the new land were filled to overflowing. But still the regiment was sadly missed, even among these new activities, by many besides the families belonging to it, and the war once more was brought nearer home to the people of the post.

West Point, in the whirl of graduation week, was brimming with activity and alive with visitors from every part of the country. Hardly a first classman but had some member of his family come to see him receive his diploma, and many had a little

crowd made up of parents and young brothers and sisters, full of eager pride and interest in their son's and brother's new honors. All over the broad parades and along the shady paths by the river cadets were walking with their friends from home, or friends from near at hand, enjoying their day or two of comparative leisure after the hard laborious grind of their daily lives. Officers, visiting officials, women and girls in their brightest summer finery, mingled with the ever-present gray, brass-buttoned coat and white trousered uniform of the corps, but in the midst of the life and gayety of a lot of young people gathered together many minds this year were thoughtful, and many hearts anxious and heavy.

Bob Gordon, in four months risen from second classman to first classman and now to second lieutenant, was too enormously interested in all these changes, with their strange and wonderful possibilities, to feel serious all the time, especially with his long three years at West Point over, graduation so suddenly come and his family there to see it and to hear the hundred things he had not had time to write about.

"It's great to see you all here," he said twenty times a day.

It was true that when the hour for graduation exercises came, when he and his classmates received their diplomas from the hands of the Secretary of

War, who in April had presented theirs to the real class of 1917 with the same simple ceremony, most of Bob's fellow graduates paused to think how many of that class had already followed General Pershing to the battle-field. The Secretary's address, always direct and brief, this year became suddenly true and real and vivid as he spoke, summoning the old ideals of the corps, and listening, Bob saw the heights of patriotism and sacrifice no longer dimly splendid but close at hand, and that hour near when every ounce of valor and endurance would be sorely needed which the twenty-year-old lieutenant could summon to his service.

Even "Benny Havens'" familiar words were changed to the singers and quickened into life.

> "May we find a soldier's resting-place, beneath a soldier's blow,
> With room enough beside our grave for Benny Havens, oh!"

But after it was over, Bob's gay smile chased away the shadow from his parents' eyes in the moment he came to shake hands and be congratulated before he hurried off to say a hundred good-byes.

They were all to leave West Point by the noon train on graduation day, and Lucy could hardly wait with reasonable patience to get Bob safely home.

"I'm afraid something or other might change their minds about your leave," she explained apologetically. "Though I suppose they could do it just as well after you get home."

"Just exactly," said Bob laughing.

Lucy made no secret of her devotion to her brother, and neither did he of returning it. Lucy was young for her age, and part of the reason was that Bob had always made a pet of his little sister, but Lucy, on the other hand, had got him out of scrapes and begged off punishments for him from the time she was four and could just manage to make her father understand her pleadings when Bob's ten-year-old naughtiness had come to grief. Though they were six years apart they had grown up companionably together, and had hardly known a parting until Bob became a West Pointer. And now Lucy dreaded and tried not to think of the parting to come. In her ears as in her mother's, the Secretary of War's stirring words had struck more heavily than on those of the boys themselves. Duty—Honor—Country,—this is the shield of West Point, and it must often be borne by others than those who have grown to manhood within its walls.

One thing distracted Lucy from her absorption in Bob and his affairs. During the two days the Gordons spent at the Military Academy, Marian walked

farther than she had done since coming to Governor's Island. Mrs. Gordon had tried in vain there to induce her to take a little daily exercise which could be gradually increased until she became as strong and active as other children. Marian could not be forced to do what she did not want to by anything short of real brutality, and she had steadily refused to make the effort Mrs. Gordon urged, though her manner of refusal always kept the ghost of politeness even in her most disobedient moments. But once her interest was aroused, as Lucy had already found out, her weariness could be resolutely overcome, and Bob, expecting to see a little invalid, had been agreeably surprised to find his cousin as keen to see everything he had to show as were any of the family, as well as very ornamental and charming in her lovely frocks and with the new-found animation in her face. She did not talk much, but then she did not often have a chance, with Bob and Lucy always chattering. William, like herself, was nearly speechless, and had trotted along beside the others with eyes and ears wide open, thrilled and happy, and missing nothing around him.

They were all together on the train as far as New York for the homeward journey, but there Bob left them for some parting class festivities. The whole of 1918 had dinner and went to a play together, and

afterward said good-bye again. Then Bob caught the last boat to Governor's Island, and almost fell asleep while his mother was tucking him in bed.

It was after ten next morning when Lucy, tiptoeing past Bob's door, heard footsteps inside. The door opened and a tall, touzle-headed figure in a gray bathrobe came out indulging in a prolonged stretch.

"Hello, Lucy! What time is it? Gee, but I had a great sleep."

"Oh, it's late, but we wanted you to sleep a lot. Hurry up now, though, won't you, Bob, and put on your uniform?" urged Lucy, dying with curiosity to see Bob a lieutenant. "I'll see that your breakfast's all ready," she added as an inducement to speed.

"All right,—have plenty of it," suggested Bob, moving off in the direction of the tub.

"Oh, Elizabeth, come look who's here!" called Lucy over the bannister as she heard footsteps on the stairs.

"Mr. Bob!" cried Elizabeth with beaming face, as she hurried up the stairs, broom in hand, and almost fell on Bob's neck in her excitement. "Oh, it was fine to have you home again!"

"It's pretty nice for me, too," grinned Bob, giving her hand a warm, friendly shake. "Karl make any more of those fluffy muffins now, Elizabeth?"

"So soon I hear how you came last night, I tell him we will have muffins for breakfast," said Elizabeth, nodding her head with calm satisfaction at her own forethought. "There's plenty left, so get dressed, Mr. Bob. William would like to wake you up since seven o'clock."

"All right, I won't be a jiffy," promised Bob, disappearing around the corner.

An officer's olive-drab service uniform is not very brilliant or striking, and Bob had seen lots of them all his life, but when he walked into the dining-room wearing one, not all the ohs and exclamations from Lucy, Marian, William, Elizabeth and finally his mother when she came into the room seemed a bit unnecessary or out of place. Even Karl, at the doorway for a greeting and scanning Bob with keen, intelligent eyes, gave a quick nod of approval, and Karl's praise was not to be despised, for he had seen plenty of soldiering in his youth. If Major Gordon had been there, no doubt he would have been just as proud of that uniform, though he never missed an opportunity to take off his own and change into "cits" when he left the post.

Bob sat down finally and began to eat his breakfast with a naturally good appetite which had been sharpened by years of early rising and hard work. It was encouraged, too, by every one around him with such suggestions as:

"Here's some raspberry jam, Bob. Put it on the muffins."

"A little more bacon, I guess, now, Mr. Bob? And a poached egg?"

"Look here," Bob remarked at last in self-defense, "if I eat like this for a week I'll have to buy new uniforms, and I can't afford to."

"Oh, pooh, it wouldn't hurt you to gain a few pounds," scoffed Lucy, looking at Bob's long legs sprawled under the table in their close-fitting breeches and shining leather leggings.

The War Department granted to the graduates of the class of 1918 a week's leave, but reserved the privilege of curtailing it by further orders. This reservation took away a good share of Lucy's pleasure in Bob's company, and kept her from planning anything with real enjoyment. It made Bob feel, as he described it, like a train on a time-table marked, "Subject to change without notice."

Bob lingered over his breakfast, enjoying to the full the right to get up when he pleased and decide leisurely what he wanted to do. But presently the whir of an airplane passing over the house made him jump nimbly up and run outdoors.

"That's where I'm going this morning," he declared, following the diminishing speck with eager eyes. "I want to see the aviation school. It's on

the new land beyond the Infantry Quarters, isn't it, Lucy?"

"Yes, over by the sea-wall. But don't go and get crazy about aviation, Bob, the way all the young officers do," frowned Lucy, who shared the popular delusion that aviation is the most dangerous arm of the service in war.

Bob had followed his father and chosen Infantry. He had graduated fairly high and might have had Coast or Field Artillery, but a general impression that Infantry was most wanted in France had led to a sudden rush for it by the two classes graduated in 1917.

"I won't ask to be transferred to-day, anyhow," said Bob, looking down from the clouds. "But there's not much harm in watching them fly, do you think, Lucy? Want to come, William?"

"Yes!" said William, so delighted at the prospect of going around with his brother that he turned a somersault on the grass while he waited to start.

"We'll walk over with you,—shall we, Marian? We're not supposed to go on the field, but we can go as far as the edge of it and bring William back."

Marian looked doubtful and asked, "How far is it?" without much enthusiasm, but Bob said decisively:

"Oh, come along, Marian! Nothing could be far on this little island. You look as though Lucy

were starting you on a voyage of discovery.' 'Come on, don't sit home and mope,—no wonder you don't eat anything."

Marian laughed and went slowly in for her hat, while William, overcome with impatience, tugged at his brother's hand and called them all dreadful slowpokes.

The aviation field was of course no great distance away, as the whole of Governor's Island, including the reclaimed land, measures hardly three miles around. A walk across the wide parade to the Infantry Quarters on Brick Row brought them within sight of it, and, turning to the left with quickening footsteps as Bob's interest grew keener, they came in a moment to the long stretch of level, grassy ground that borders the sea-wall.

All the way across the parade, Bob had made Lucy and Marian laugh at his stories of the cadets' desperate efforts to put variety into their hard-working lives. Bob had done his best to help his classmates enjoy life, in lawful as well as unlawful ways, and had written a play to be acted for the amusement of the camp which had been a wonderful success even if it had cost him a good many hours of study. The jokes which he repeated from it were all pure West Point fun, most of them true occurrences and rather unintelligible to an outsider, but Lucy had been up there enough to understand

them pretty well, and Marian guessed a good deal, with a sharpness no one gave her credit for.

But as soon as they neared the aviation field Bob grew silent and had no eyes for anything but the big shelter sheds at one end, and the group of men gathered about a machine they had just rolled out of one of them. He took leave of his companions with quite unflattering haste, saying, "Well, good-bye, and thanks for coming with me. I'll be back before lunch."

He waved his cap and walked on, while Lucy grabbed William's unwilling hand as he started to follow and explained, "You know you mayn't go there. You're not an officer. Be good, William, please!"

"Well, I'm not a girl!" shouted William indignantly, then forgot his anger at sight of a big biplane that came swooping down upon the field and ran swiftly on its little wheels to the open mouth of the hangar.

"Oh, what a beauty!" said Lucy with shining eyes. "I don't wonder Bob loves them. Come on, Marian, we might as well get Julia and go to the Red Cross a little while."

At lunch-time, Bob reappeared, terribly hungry and in fine spirits.

"I found Captain Evans out there, Father," he said as they sat down to the table. "He came yes-

terday to join that new battalion from Fort Slocum. And Captain Brent is here too, isn't he? I didn't know he'd gone in for aviation. I remember him at Fort Leavenworth when he used to play with us kids just after he graduated. He's a fine fellow. Give me some bread, please, Karl. I sure am hungry."

After luncheon, when they were all gathered on the piazza for the few minutes before Major Gordon returned to his office, Marian said suddenly to Bob, "Karl looks at you as if he wished he had on a uniform himself."

"Perhaps he does," said Bob grinning. "Oh, he's as German as the Kaiser, but what cream-puffs he can make!" Bob had just eaten three of them.

"Think they have softened his heart, Bob,—is that the idea?" asked Major Gordon, lighting his pipe.

"No,—but they have softened mine toward him. Before I went to West Point I used to hate his self-satisfied ways, but whenever I ate one of his cream-puffs I didn't so much blame him."

"I don't think I ever remember your eating *one,*" remarked Lucy thoughtfully.

Bob laughed, then said as his father rose, "I'm going to walk to Headquarters with you, Father. Then I'm going to play a round of golf with Lucy, though she didn't know it until now, and after that

I'm going over to see Captain Brent a little while. I want to ask him about a million things."

Toward four o'clock of that afternoon, when the squad of recruits drilling on the hot parade began to look longingly toward the descending sun and listen eagerly for the bugler sounding recall, Bob walked home at a slow and thoughtful pace. William and Teddy Matthews were playing on the grass by the piazza and rushed to welcome him back, but when he left them and entered the house he found it quite deserted. Lucy and her mother were out giving some of the invitations for a party in Bob's honor to include Julia and the girls and boys Lucy's age as well as the older girls and young officers. Marian was taking a nap up-stairs, honestly tired out. Bob went into the kitchen and found Elizabeth's little figure bending over the oven.

"How are you, Elizabeth? Did the dentist hurt much?" he asked, perching on the kitchen table and carefully removing a handkerchief wrapped about his thumb.

"Oh, not so much, Mr. Bob," said Elizabeth, straightening up with a quick smile. "But what was wrong with your hand?" she inquired, the smile fading as she caught sight of Bob's bruised and swollen thumb.

"I squeezed it,—in a door," explained Bob, try-

ing to wiggle it and stopping short. "Ouch, it's stiff. Suppose you could do anything to keep me from losing the nail, Elizabeth? What a bother!"

"Sure could I," said Elizabeth, whose English grew worse when she was excited, taking the injured hand in hers and examining it closely. "Stay here until I cold water bring." She ran for a bowl of water, into which she slipped a piece of ice. "Now,—put your hand in, so. I will see what I can get up-stairs."

Bob sat with his thumb in the ice-water, and felt the ache gradually lessen until Elizabeth came down again with witch-hazel and a strip of bandage.

"Now I will wrap you up good. It is a little better, yes? Oh, it will not be so bad."

"You're a brick, Elizabeth. What should I have done without you?" said Bob gratefully, looking at the little German woman's eager, sympathetic face and feeling her nimble, gentle hands as they wrapped up his sore thumb in a cool, wet covering.

Elizabeth laughed, fastening the tail of the bandage about his wrist. "Oh, Mr. Bob, how you used to get mad at me when I tell you to wash your hands! You remember?"

"Don't I, though? Wasn't I a bad little kid! William is a lot better."

"You were not bad at all," said Elizabeth

quickly. "Your mother has not one bad child got, but boys are always plenty of trouble. I not forget, though, when I was so long sick at Leavenworth, how you came and sat with me, and stayed in from your play when I was all alone, while I told you little stories of old Germany." She looked up at Bob with eyes full of affection, as though she still saw in the tall young officer before her the kind little boy she had known.

"Did I, Elizabeth?" asked Bob, smiling. "Thanks ever so much for fixing me up," he added as he examined the neat bandage with approving eyes. "I declare, it feels nearly all right again."

Bob went back to the dining-room. Then, hearing voices from his father's study, he went there and found Karl bowing and departing after a conversation with Major Gordon.

"Hello, Dad, I didn't know you were here," he said, sitting down near his father's desk.

"I came in just a few minutes ago. I was rather anxious to hear about you. Well, did they let you fly?"

"You bet they did. Captain Brent was as nice as possible about it. He took me up as his passenger. We flew all around the island and over the Statue of Liberty. Dad, it's great!"

"What happened to your hand?" inquired the Major, without any great enthusiasm in his face.

"Oh, just stupid of me. I was so busy watching the plane rolled out that I got my thumb caught in the shed door. I didn't feel it much then, but it swelled afterward, and Elizabeth just tied it up for me."

"Well, don't go up again just now, Bob, will you? And we needn't mention it to your mother."

"All right, Dad. But what I really wanted to ask you is this. How do you feel about Karl living here since we are at war? Of course he's not a reservist and past the age for military service, but I'm blessed if he looks like anything but a German to me, even if he has been so long with us. Don't you think they could use him for something in the spy line?"

"No doubt they could," returned Major Gordon, "although I don't think Karl's brains are of the acute order to make a valuable spy. But I've thought the situation over for some time, and I feel about the way you do. In fact, Karl and I were talking things over just before you came in, and he quite sensibly said he had decided that he and his wife would be more comfortable for the duration of the war if they went to a neutral country."

"There aren't very many he can get to. Does he mean Mexico?"

"Probably. I didn't question him about it very closely. But wait until I have to tell your mother

and the children that Elizabeth is going, too. She doesn't know it yet herself, but of course she won't leave Karl."

"Where's Bob?" called Lucy's voice from the hall, with the sudden sound of footsteps. "Oh, here you are!" she answered for herself, entering the study flushed and warm after their sunny walk about the post.

"Why, what's happened to your thumb, Bob?" asked Mrs. Gordon from the doorway, coming forward as she caught sight of Bob's bandaged hand.

"Nothing much, Mother," Bob reassured her. "I squeezed it in the door of the aviation shed and it hurt a little, so Elizabeth tied it up."

"Are you sure it doesn't hurt now?" insisted Lucy, touching it gingerly.

"Not a bit."

"I must go out and speak to Karl about our little party," said Mrs. Gordon, picking up her parasol and turning toward the door.

"Were you at the aviation field again this afternoon?" asked Lucy, curiously. "I thought you were at the Bachelor's Quarters with Mr. Brent."

"I met him there," explained Bob, "but we went out afterward."

"And went to the aviation field?" Lucy's eyes were fixed so hard on her brother's face that he

wanted to laugh as she went on with deliberate certainty, "I know—now. You went to fly. Why wouldn't you tell me?"

"Sh-h! I would have told you, but Dad thought Mother might worry about it," said Bob, smiling at Lucy's big, reproachful eyes and the little, worried frown between her brows. "There wasn't any danger, anyway, was there, Dad? They go up here every day, and there has been only one serious accident since the school commenced."

"Oh, Bob, wasn't it great?" cried Lucy, forgetting her fears in her own longings to share one of the many flights she had watched. "Were you in the one that flew over the harbor an hour ago?"

"I guess so. We were up at about that time. It didn't seem a minute that we were flying." Bob's face grew bright again at the thrilling remembrance, and he turned eagerly to his father. "How can any one say, Dad, that this war hasn't the chances for heroism that other wars had? When you can be an airman—well, you know what I mean,—you can do anything."

Major Gordon tapped his pencil thoughtfully against his palm. "If you have that particular kind of grit and steady endurance. Otherwise, you can serve your country much better on the ground."

"Dad, you're a regular wet-blanket," said Bob with a grin. "I guess I'd better make a good infantryman first,—is that it?"

Lucy had slipped her arm through Bob's and stood looking at him in anxious silence. Two days of leave were over, and it seemed such a little bit of a while remaining before Bob joined his regiment at Fort Totten. And that regiment, as everybody knew, was in fine trim and daily awaiting orders for the other side. Lucy scorned to wish Bob transferred to any other, but now she vaguely wondered whether a change to aviation would keep him longer from the battle-front, and what the difference in his life would be.

"Come on, Captain Lucy. Let's go find Mother," said Bob, rousing his sister with a soft tweak of her hair as she rubbed her head thoughtfully against his sleeve.

"Oh, I must go and tell Marian about the party. She must be awake," said Lucy, hearing footsteps on the floor above and feeling that a glimpse of her cousin's care-free prettiness might cheer her from her sudden gloom.

"There's recall," said Major Gordon, taking up his cap as the bugle sounded. "I want to see Evans when he comes off duty."

Outside on the grass Elizabeth was helping William pick up his playthings, ending by doing

most of it herself while he climbed onto her back and wound his arms around her neck.

Major Gordon looked after them with a regretful sigh as Elizabeth finished by picking William up, playthings and all, and running with him into the house.

CHAPTER V

"MY ORDERS HAVE COME"

"IT isn't as though they were strangers, or we'd known them only a little while," Lucy protested, unconvinced. "They've both been with us so long, I'm sure they are more American than anything else. In the three years we've been stationed here they've hardly left Governor's Island."

"Well, I think your father and Bob are right, just the same," said Marian, rubbing her eyes.

"Perhaps they are," sighed Lucy, fiddling with the pillow-case on Marian's bed with restless fingers, "but it seems somehow as though everybody was going at once. The Twenty-Eighth and now Bob, and we can't even have Elizabeth left. We'll never find any one to like us all the way she does, and take care of us. I don't so much mind losing Karl,—he is obstinate and queer, and I don't think he's always very kind to Elizabeth, though he's served Father so faithfully. But it's just a shame they have to go now when Mother has so much to bother her anyway." Lucy's usually cheerful face was heavily clouded.

She was sitting on the floor by Marian's bed the

morning after Bob's party, her kodak, which she had run up-stairs to get for him, beside her, while she poured her trouble into Marian's sympathetic if sleepy ears. Marian had grown fond enough of Lucy to feel an interest in all she cared about. Indeed, her companionship with her cousin, the first she had ever had with a girl her own age, was the strongest influence so far in awakening her from her dull and fretful indifference.

Lucy had known nothing of her father's decision in regard to Karl and Elizabeth until this morning. Mrs. Gordon had talked matters over with her husband the evening before, but Lucy had been too much occupied in getting out dance records and making sure that every one was coming to give heed to anything else. With the arrival of the battalion from Fort Slocum many new officers with their families were on the post. So she enjoyed Bob's party as much as he did, though no one liked a gay crowd and a dance better than Bob, even when the crowd was only a little group of officers' sons and young lieutenants, with a dozen girls from his own age down to Lucy's, and the dance no more than rugs pushed back in two rooms, and a phonograph which Mrs. Gordon tended all the evening.

Marian had danced without a sign of weariness and with a color in her pale cheeks at the unusual exertion that made Mrs. Gordon resolve to urge her

again to take part in outdoor games with Lucy and the others. At eleven she had gone up to bed, tired out, but Mrs. Gordon was satisfied that she had enjoyed herself, and let her sleep the clock around.

The clock on her mantel was striking now, and she sat up with a little less than her usual morning listlessness.

"I'm going to get up, Lucy. What's the kodak for?" she asked, reaching for her slippers.

"Bob wants it," explained Lucy; "he's going to take pictures of the family to carry with him when he goes. Hurry up and be taken with us. I'd better go down now, I guess. He must think I'm lost," she added, rising from the floor with a little of her serenity restored.

Through the open door as she ran down-stairs Lucy saw Bob seated on the front steps engaged in conversation with Sergeant Cameron. So she stopped to put a film in the kodak at her leisure before going out into the brilliant sunlight.

Sergeant Cameron was standing at ease with one foot on the lowest step, his bright blue eyes fixed upon Bob's face as the two exchanged a fire of interested questions.

"The Lieutenant expects to see service on the other side very shortly?" he surmised, when Bob had told him the regiment to which he was assigned and the week's leave allowed him.

"Yes, I'm pretty sure to," Bob agreed.

"And how do you feel about that?" persisted the Sergeant, his eyes brightening at the words.

"Oh, I shan't mind it," said Bob briefly, meeting the non-commissioned officer's glance with the understanding of old and well-tried friends.

Bob's feeling of respect and warm liking for this faithful veteran, a true type of the old "non-com" who forms so valuable and efficient a part of our service, a very tower of strength for his superiors to rely on, was oddly mixed with a secret boyish satisfaction at hearing himself called "the Lieutenant," in a respectful tone, by the old soldier who had taught him to ride bareback on the western plains, and scolded him unmercifully if he did not come up to service standards of horsemanship, when he was a long-legged youngster of thirteen at Fort Leavenworth.

Sergeant Cameron had not received enough early education to join the ranks of those younger noncoms who were eagerly working to pass the examination for a commission which the shortage of officers had caused the government to offer them after the declaration of war. He was not, anyway, ambitious in that direction, preferring to fill the place in which he satisfied himself and others, with a comfortable knowledge that the service needed him and more men like him. If he had fallen under

Bob Gordon's command, as Bob was sincerely wishing he had, the young lieutenant's orders would have been carried out by him in the face of every hazard, with an unshakable faith and allegiance, though not with any dog-like submission. For he was a man of independent mind, whose honest thoughts, shining through his eyes, would have told Bob with every glance what heights of devotion to duty he expected of the Major's son.

"Well, good luck to you, Sergeant, and good-bye, if I don't see you before I go," said Bob at last, getting up and holding out his hand. "We may meet again, you know, before we expect it."

Sergeant Cameron took Bob's hand in a quick, hard grasp, and murmured something no less hearty for being almost inaudible. Then he saluted stiffly and turned away in a rapid walk toward Headquarters.

Lucy came out, screwing up the film in the rather refractory camera, as Bob turned to go indoors. "Here I am, Bob; don't be discouraged. Marian's coming in a minute, too."

"All right. Mother! Come and be taken," Bob called through the window, bringing out Mrs. Gordon and William in obliging haste.

"Now you and Captain Lucy and Corporal William all stand there on the grass and look cheer-

ful. Remember I'm going to carry these pictures nobody knows where," cautioned Bob, in words hardly calculated to make the faces before him brighten very much, though they tried to do their best.

"Here's Marian," said Lucy, turning her head after the camera had safely clicked. "Take her with me, Bob, will you? I want one for myself."

"And I'll send one to Father to show him how fat I've grown," said Marian, who felt very dutiful lately after making several weak attempts to eat when she did not feel like it.

Mrs. Gordon smiled thoughtfully at the two girls as they stood with arms linked together, Lucy, suntanned and bright-eyed, filled with the energy which so often overdid itself in tumblings and breakings, and Marian, delicate and fair as a little flower in her fresh blue muslin dress, with new-brushed curls gleaming in the sun, but both grown pretty good friends in spite of so many differences.

"Now, Marian, I wish you would take one of all my children for me," asked Mrs. Gordon when the film was turned again. "I will stand off here and tell them how to look."

"All right; come on, Bob," said Lucy. "You stand here, me next and William last, so we'll look like a nice little flight of steps."

"Bob takes up most of the room," commented Marian, peering into the finder, "but I suppose he ought to."

"Of course," said Bob seriously, while William nodded such a solemn agreement that everybody laughed, and Marian lost her range and had to start over.

With this the film was used up and the family went indoors and sat down to lunch, after a telephone message had come informing them that Major Gordon had been called away to Fort Totten until night.

"I'll develop these beautiful things after lunch," said Bob as he laid down the camera. "By that time it won't be quite so hot for tennis."

"Every time I see a post-card I expect to find my writing on it," remarked Lucy, glancing toward the mail which Elizabeth had just brought in after the postman's ring. "Mr. Harding promised to write, and here it is the second of September, and we know the ships are safely there."

"Just one for me and the rest are Bob's," said Mrs. Gordon. "Play tennis early then, Bob, and get back in time to look over your things with me," she suggested, opening her letter. "I want to see what you need before I go to town to-morrow."

"I can't play tennis," said Bob suddenly, in a voice that sounded excited, as he held out to his

mother the sheet of paper he had taken from its long envelope. "My orders have come."

"Bob!" cried Lucy and her mother in a breath, as Lucy sprang from her place to read over her mother's shoulder the few typewritten lines.

War Department

Adjutant General's Office

Washington, D. C., September 1, 1917.

So much of the leave of absence granted Second Lieutenant Robert Lee Gordon, 136th regiment of Infantry, by paragraph 6, special orders No. 82, as remains unexpired on the 3d instant is cancelled. Lieutenant Gordon will proceed to Fort Totten and report for duty not later than twelve o'clock noon of the 3d instant.

By order of the Adjutant General,

H. C. McNair.

"Oh, Bob," said Lucy from the depths of her bitter disappointment; "they might have let you have three days!"

Mrs. Gordon let fall the paper on the table and took Bob's hand in hers, while Elizabeth's eager, troubled eyes watched her closely.

"Will you go now,—this second?" asked William, standing puzzled and anxious by his mother's chair, unnoticed in the general confusion.

"MY ORDERS HAVE COME"

"No, not till to-morrow morning," said Bob, his surprise over and a hundred questions flitting through his brain. "Come, Mother, never mind! What's a day or two, anyway? I have to go, so let's be cheerful about it. Buck up, Captain Lucy! You be a sport."

"I will," said Lucy, smiling through the tears that trembled on her lashes. "Look at Marian, Mother. She's worried to death about us." For at sight of Mrs. Gordon's white face Marian had risen from her place overcome with sympathy, roused for the moment from herself and vainly trying to summon words of courage for another instead of asking them for her own need.

Mrs. Gordon looked around at them all and smiled, the color coming slowly back to her pale cheeks. "It was so sudden, Bob,—I couldn't realize it at first," she said, patting Bob's shoulder as he bent anxiously over her. "But of course I ought to have known your orders might come at any moment. Your father told me so. But you get so many long envelopes marked Official Business that I never thought when I saw that one. Now we'll have to get to work in earnest. We'll finish our lunch, children, and go up-stairs and pack."

"I have all the rest of the day and to-night," said Bob cheeringly, smiling at Lucy, who was setting a good example by eating her dessert as

calmly as she could with so many feelings struggling for utterance and her heart racing hard with painful excitement.

"I want just my steamer trunk and bag," said Bob, falling back on details as the easiest thing to talk about at the moment. "We'll get that all done and shan't have anything to bother about to-night. Do you mind calling up Julia and Mr. Lewis, Marian, and telling them we can't play with them this afternoon?"

The sun was sinking when the boat from Fort Totten drew in to the Governor's Island wharf and Major Gordon, stepping ashore, walked rapidly homeward.

Inside his own door he found Bob coming downstairs and accosted him with, "Well, any news for you, Bob?"

"Yes, Dad, my orders have come," Bob returned, springing down to his father's side.

Major Gordon nodded his head, his eyes on his son. "I thought so." He lowered his voice a little as the two moved off into the study. "I was sent for to-day to inspect the supplies for your regiment at Totten. Three transports sail this week under convoy of the cruisers in the river. What time do you report?"

"To-morrow noon."

"Well, son, how do you feel about it?" Major

Gordon's voice was not so calm itself as he put the question, one hand upon Bob's shoulder.

"I'm sorry on Mother's account,—awfully—but I want to go," said Bob, gripping his father's arm.

Up-stairs Elizabeth had been helping Mrs. Gordon in Bob's room, and now she led William away, reluctant to go, though he was tired out with running from trunk to closet and tagging close at his big brother's active heels.

"We'll sit down in your room here and have a story, shall we?" she proposed, drawing up a low rocking-chair by William's bed and lifting the sleepy little boy upon her lap.

"What shall I tell?" she asked, when William leaned comfortably back against her, his unwillingness to leave the others forgotten.

"Tell about the goose princess," murmured William against her arm.

"But that you have so often heard," protested Elizabeth, but faintly, knowing she would have to yield.

As William only grunted in reply she plunged patiently into the little old story that was William's favorite, and very easy to tell indeed, for William prompted her at every few words.

"Now the frog comes hopping in, doesn't he?" he raised his head presently to ask.

"Yes," Elizabeth nodded, "and up he came be-

fore the little princess to stand, but she was so frightened she ran back to the chimney corner."

"And the stork,—what did he say?" put in William.

"The stork look very cross, poking out by the chimney his long neck, and he said, 'Only for good childrens will the frog answer your questions.' Then the stork flap his large wings against the chimney and fly up out of sight. And while the little princess look up after him she see the sky through the chimney-top ——"

"And the house was all gone, wasn't it?"

"The little house was all gone, and in her old blue dress the princess was on the hillside sitting, and her geese were making a fine noise around her."

"And next day," prompted William, when Elizabeth stopped to take a breath, then settled back comfortably once more to listen as she went on.

William was always quiet and contented in Elizabeth's company. There was no end to the tales she could tell, all about elves and gnomes and strange, wise animals, and good and bad children who played among them. Her stories came from Elizabeth's childhood in a country of simple-hearted, fanciful people, the kindly soul of old Germany, with its love of music and children and of tranquil happiness;—that Germany which is bound up with the Kaiser and his Junkers in their mad and pitiless thirst for

conquest only by the blind obedience that comes from their simplicity.

"And where did it all happen, Elizabeth?" William wanted to know when at last the story had come to a satisfactory end and the frog and the princess had reached an understanding.

"Oh, that happen far away from here, William. Over where I come from, in my old country," Elizabeth explained, untangling William's legs from her apron.

"Could I go over there and see it, do you think?" asked the little boy, smothering a yawn as he put the question.

Elizabeth gave a heavy sigh which sounded so different from her usual cheerful self that William looked quickly around into her face and saw it for a moment set in sad, tired lines. But almost at once she smiled at him again and said briskly, "Well, maybe you go some time there. But now we must go quick to bed."

CHAPTER VI

GOOD-BYES

"I'LL develop those pictures and send them to you, Bob," Lucy promised. "I'll send them to Fort Totten and they'll be forwarded,—if you shouldn't be there." She evaded just then the subject that was uppermost in her mind.

They were on their way to the dock the morning of Bob's departure, and he had just said good-bye to Karl and Elizabeth, who were in fact still standing on the piazza steps, Elizabeth waving for the last time as they turned the corner by the General's house. Major Gordon had ordered the government boat to Fort Totten with additional supplies, and Bob was to accompany his father on it, as well as Mrs. Gordon, who, for the privilege of seeing Bob a few hours longer, had hastily decided to spend the day with a friend at the fort, and return with her husband in the evening.

Bob had only to say good-bye to Lucy, Marian and William, which he found quite enough at the moment when they reached the dock and the *General Meigs* whistled a warning signal.

"You'll write—I mean often, every day, won't you?" Lucy begged, looking up at Bob's erect, soldierly figure and at the jolly boyish face that was so thoughtful just now, with a feeling like desperate homesickness in her heart.

"Oh, you bet I will, Captain Lucy. I'll tell you everything. And perhaps I'll be able to see you all again before we sail," Bob suggested hopefully, wishing that Lucy were coming on the boat with his mother, to delay the parting a little longer.

But Lucy hated good-byes as much as he, and she knew how Bob hated them, and in past days they had always agreed to get them over as quickly as possible. So when Mrs. Gordon called from the edge of the dock, "Hurry, Bob dear! Father says to come," Lucy managed to put on the brightest kind of smile as Bob took leave of William and Marian. When he turned to her she said cheerfully, "Good luck, Bob, old boy, and we'll never stop thinking of you!" Brother and sister exchanged a bear hug that knocked Lucy's hat off onto the dock and then Bob, seizing his bag and raincoat, jumped down on the *General Meigs'* deck by his mother's side.

Bob looked back at the three faces watching him as the boat pulled out, of which William's was by far the most solemn, and waved his cap and called out a last good-bye.

Lucy, gazing after him, saw his face blur as her eyes filled up with sudden tears, but she winked them angrily away and turned to Marian, when the boat's white wake and stern were all that they could see. "Let's go home, Marian. I hate seeing people go, don't you?" were the inadequate words that came to her lips.

"Yes, I do," said Marian, who looked as though she could understand, and putting her hand through Lucy's arm she led the way back up the hill.

Once in the house again Lucy dropped down on the first resting-place at hand, which happened to be the piano-stool, and sat with hands clasped about one knee, staring idly before her. For a moment she could not take up the round of duties her mother had left her, nor look sensibly ahead to what came next. It was too strange and hard to realize that Bob was gone. That his brief leave was cut short and ended, and with it all the pleasant things she had planned for the time they should be together. "Bob's gone," she repeated to herself, and could not seem to go beyond the thought.

What roused her was Marian's coming suddenly over to take a seat beside her with a face so set with determination that Lucy looked at her in astonishment.

"There's no use sitting here and doing nothing, Lucy," Marian said decidedly. "It will only make

you feel worse. Let's develop those pictures right away so that Bob will surely get them. I'll help if you will show me how, and William can watch us."

Lucy could hardly help laughing, far as she was from feeling jolly, at Marian's sudden assumption of authority. The change was almost startling from the self-absorbed passiveness out of which she could so seldom be roused, unless some one tried to make her do what she did not like. But in consequence her words had more effect now in distracting Lucy from her gloomy thoughts.

"All right, Marian, I will," she smiled, giving a lazy stretch of her arms above her head. The family had risen early that morning, for the *General Meigs* left at eight o'clock. "I have to do some telephoning for Mother first, but that won't take very long."

"Lucy! Are you here?" called a voice from the piazza, and Julia Houston poked her head through a window. "Oh, hello, I'll climb in," she added, getting over the sill with her usual swiftness of action.

"I was just wishing you'd come, Julia," said Lucy, rushing to meet her friend. "Oh! *Isn't* he sweet! Where did you get him?" For Julia was clutching with both arms a fat, yellow Newfoundland puppy that wanted awfully to get on its own feet.

"Somebody gave Father two of them," explained

Julia, dropping her wriggling burden on to the floor with a sigh of relief. "And Father says we may keep only one, and for me to give the other away, so I thought I'd let you have first chance. I know you need cheering up to-day, and they are the cunningest, funniest little ducks. I have been playing with them ever since I woke up."

"I'd simply love to have him," exclaimed Lucy, shouting to be heard over William's sudden squeals of delight as he came running in and saw the puppy.

"Oh, let's have him, let's keep him,—mayn't we, Lucy?" he begged from the floor, where he and the puppy were already a tangle of legs and paws, as the puppy delightedly recognized something near his own size to play with.

"I don't know until we ask Father," said Lucy, smiling. "But I guess he won't mind."

"They're just alike. We'll have to label them to tell them apart," said Julia. "Father wanted to name them something German, because they're so yellow, but I certainly won't. I've named ours MacDougal after the Canadian officer who gave them to us, and I'll call him Mac."

"Well, we shall simply have to keep this one. He's too sweet," said Lucy, trying to push her fingers into the puppy's thick furry coat while he rolled over in every direction.

"Let's name him something to remind us of our own men over in France," suggested Marian vaguely, her mind still filled with the recent departures for the front.

"Call him American Expeditionary Force," laughed Julia. "He won't come when he's called, so a long name does just as well."

"You two think of a nice one," said Lucy, getting up from the floor, "while I do my telephoning and speak to Elizabeth. Then we're going to develop some pictures, Julia, and you can help. William will take care of,—you name him now."

With the help of Julia's lively company the morning was not very long in passing. By the time Lucy's tasks were done and the roll of films had been developed, dried, and printed in the sun on the piazza steps, her spirits had recovered their usual brightness, and whatever lack of real cheer lay beneath she managed to keep to herself.

By luncheon time William had become so attached to the puppy, who was still unchristened, with a choice of about twenty names of all sorts offered him, that Julia went home without him, leaving William beaming with delight.

"He may have some milk right on the table by my plate, mayn't he, Lucy?" he suggested, carrying the new pet into the dining-room with him.

"No, he may not," said Lucy decidedly. "But he may have it on the floor while you eat. I'm a sight!" she added, looking frowningly at her dress as she tucked back a wisp of hair. "I never noticed how awfully I looked after all that work, but it's too late to change now."

Lucy was feeling heavy-hearted again, at sight of the empty places at the table, and did not care much about eating. She had a funny moment though when Marian, noticing how indifferent she seemed to the good food before her, said coaxingly, "Go on and eat, Lucy, won't you? You'll feel much better if you do."

"It seems like Alice through the looking-glass," Lucy thought to herself, her lips twitching with amusement. "Everything is turned around to-day. Suppose you eat something yourself, for a change," she countered, glancing at Marian's empty plate.

After lunch she went up-stairs to change her dress, with a look at the fresh white one Marian had found time to put on when the pictures were finished. She was soberly brushing her hair with hard slaps of the brush, before the glass, when Elizabeth passed by the door and stopped at sight of her.

"I fasten your dress, Miss Lucy, shall I?" she asked, hesitating in the doorway.

"Yes, please do," said Lucy, feeling suddenly very much like hearing Elizabeth's quiet, pleasant

voice. "Sit down and wait until I finish my hair and then you may help me."

"So you are not too long, I wait," consented Elizabeth, coming in the room and commencing to hang up clothes and put away shoes instead of sitting down as Lucy had suggested.

"Oh, Elizabeth, I hated so to have Bob go," Lucy could not help saying, the thoughts she had kept back all day clamoring for utterance. "It was so hard to have him here only two days,—and, oh, I wish to goodness you weren't going too!"

Elizabeth paused in her work, her hand on the closet door, and regarded Lucy with sad face and wistful eyes.

"It is not that I wish to go, Miss Lucy," she protested, shaking her head slowly and twisting nervous fingers in her big apron. "It is very hard for me to leave you all so dear to me and go to a strange country."

"Where are you going?" asked Lucy, tying her hair ribbon in a hasty bow as she crossed the room to Elizabeth's side.

"I not know," Elizabeth responded uncertainly. "Karl did not tell me. He only say, we must leave America. They do not want us here."

"Oh, but we do want you, Elizabeth!" exclaimed Lucy, fixing pleading eyes on the little German woman's face, as though in despair of making her

understand. "War is a terrible thing! It has to come on all the people, whether they deserve it or not, but you didn't want it any more than I did, and it's not your fault."

"I never think my old country fight with America, Miss Lucy!" cried Elizabeth, tears standing now in her eyes as she faltered out the words. "So long our Kaiser keeps peace at home for us! I wonder now how he have to go to war."

Lucy did not quite know what to say to this, so she only put a comforting hand on Elizabeth's shoulder.

"I hope, though, maybe the war end before Mr. Bob get to the battle-field," Elizabeth suggested hopefully after a moment's thoughtful silence, her habitual cheerfulness asserting itself even now above her melancholy.

"Perhaps," said Lucy doubtfully, her mind turned once more to her brother, with a glimpse of the closer meaning the war now held for all the Gordon family.

"Well, I must go down, Miss Lucy," sighed Elizabeth, but she smiled at the same time and wiped away her tears with a corner of her apron.

"Wait a second. I have something for you," said Lucy, opening the closet door and fumbling in the pocket of the blouse Elizabeth had just hung up. "I printed a picture on purpose for you. It's

of Bob and William and me. I thought you'd like it." She drew out the little snap-shot that Marian had taken the day before and gave it to Elizabeth with a glance at the little group,—Bob's straight, soldierly figure, her own beside him, and William peeking around at his brother from the end of the line. Bob's boots were especially in evidence, but it was a good likeness of all three.

"Oh, thank you, dear Miss Lucy," cried Elizabeth, beaming with pleasure at the gift, and even more at the feeling of still being friends with the Gordon children which the little talk had given her. "I keep it always with me, and I often look at it and think of you."

She tucked the picture in the pocket of her apron and went off down-stairs, while Lucy, with a sudden return of the lump in her throat, sat down at her desk to mail a set of the pictures to Bob.

When Mrs. Gordon came home late that afternoon with her husband, in great need of being cheered and comforted, for the activity at Fort Totten spoke plainly of the regiment's departure, Lucy and Marian met her at the door with welcoming faces. Lucy had overcome her low spirits at last, with the satisfaction of angrily calling herself unpatriotic names, and she was firmly entrenched now behind her resolution of courageous cheerfulness.

No one had more courage than Mrs. Gordon, and her trouble did not show itself long, but Lucy's sympathetic heart could guess it, even out of sight. Mrs. Gordon was used enough to seeing men called away to hazardous service. She had seen her husband go off to the Spanish War as a young lieutenant, to China at the time of the Boxer uprising, and to the Mexican border only a year ago. She knew that Bob must take his chosen place, but he seemed so young to go. This year, that would have made him a first classman at West Point, found him still a boy in his mother's eyes, not grown to the measure of man's trials and hardships. It had to be, and Bob's mother knew it and submitted, but it was hard.

Major Gordon was tired with a long day's tedious work, and the family sat out on the cool piazza, where William ate his supper, while Mrs. Gordon told the little news she had of Bob's fellow officers and surroundings. William played on the floor with his new pet, from whom he refused to be separated, the puppy's big, awkward paws flopping in every direction and his furry body squirming with excitement when William pretended to be another dog and jumped at him. Nobody could help smiling at the jolly little beast, or at William's delight in him, and Lucy said:

"The puppy is the happiest person here. I think

we need him, Father. Anyway, if you don't let us have him I think William will go over and live at the Houstons'."

"Oh, keep him if you wish to," said Major Gordon, poking a boot at the puppy, who at once grabbed it in his little teeth and rolled over and over. "Only don't let him get to chewing up my clothes, William, or out he goes. What's his name?"

"You said he was happy, Lucy, let's call him that," suggested William, grabbing his pet with both hands.

"Well, we've been trying to give him some grand name all day," said Lucy, "but I suppose we might as well come down to that and be done with it."

"I like it," said William. "Your name's Happy, do you hear?" he told the puppy, who cheerfully wagged his tail, cocking one alert ear at his little master, while Mrs. Gordon drew William over to her side.

The two days following Bob's departure brought other changes in the Gordon household, for on the third day Karl and Elizabeth took their leave. The parting between William and Elizabeth was almost a tragedy, as Lucy remarked, sinking into a piazza chair that afternoon, feeling, as she announced to Marian, "dead beat." She began sort-

ing the mail which had just arrived, her hands moving listlessly, her thoughts filled with the sailing of the One Hundred and Thirty-Sixth, which had taken place, to the best of Major Gordon's knowledge, early that morning. Mrs. Gordon came out after showing the kitchen to the newly arrived cook, their only servant for the time being, and looked over Lucy's shoulder. Together they seized the post-card Bob had mailed from Fort Totten the night before, and read the few words scribbled on it:

"Good-bye, and love from Bob."

In spite of Major Gordon's announcement of the intended sailing this short message seemed to mean more to them, somehow, than any official tidings. Bob never said good-bye until the last moment.

Lucy looked down among the neglected letters and papers again to hide her tear-dimmed eyes, but a moment later she held up a second card, exclaiming:

"Look here! Something nice has actually happened! It's one of my post-cards back from Mr. Harding!"

"Oh, Lucy, let me see!" cried Marian, rushing to her side in unusual excitement. "I never really thought you'd get one back again."

"I did," said Lucy confidently, and read aloud the lines written with indelible pencil:

"DEAR CAPTAIN LUCY:

"Here I am, and I haven't forgotten my promise. We'll soon be in the thick of it; but I can't say any more, only I think of you often. Send me any news of Bob's coming. R. H."

"William was wrong, after all, when he said we could tell where it came from by the postmark," said Marian, turning the card over with gentle fingers, "for there isn't any postmark, except New York."

That evening, when the two girls were getting ready for bed, Lucy said to Marian, with relief and thankfulness in her voice, "Anyway, there is no one else left to go just now." But she was not quite right.

Sergeant Cameron's wife had been ill a long time, and in spite of every care she died a few days after Bob's departure. The Sergeant was devoted to her, and soon he found his lonely little house unbearable, and his quiet round of duties grown suddenly distasteful. So one morning he summoned up courage to ask Major Gordon to have him transferred from his staff detail back to the regiment. Very reluctantly Major Gordon consented, for Sergeant Cameron's loss was a heavy one with the Quartermaster's Department swamped with work, and he had few such tried and capable assistants.

"I can't refuse you, Sergeant," he said at last.

" I've put in the application for you, and I think it will be approved. Our regiment is still at Plattsburg Barracks, but there is talk of its soon seeing foreign service." Major Gordon thought of his own staff detail as he spoke, but whatever hopes or wishes he had in sympathy with the Sergeant's, he gave no voice to them.

" I'm very grateful to the Major," said Sergeant Cameron, saluting. " And I'm sorry to leave—I am indeed, sir."

So it was that in that short, eventful summer Lucy saw her friends go one by one, in such sudden changes as even army life had never known before. And in their places came others who were not always found to be such strangers either, for an army girl has friends from east to west, and must learn to bear partings bravely and make the most of those who are near at hand.

CHAPTER VII

A TOUGH JOB

It was the first week in November, and a chilly wind was blowing across Governor's Island, shaking down the last leaves from the bare branches of the trees and tossing those on the ground into swirling heaps. The sentry walking past the Gordons' house wore an overcoat now, and Quartermaster's men were putting up storm doors and windows all along General's Row.

Lucy and Marian were hurrying home from the Matthews', for it was almost lunch time. For a month and a half Anne Matthews' governess had been giving lessons every morning to Anne, Julia, Lucy and Marian, and she made them work hard enough to be hungry by twelve o'clock. Mrs. Gordon had half intended sending Lucy to boarding-school this year, but just now she did not feel like losing her from home, and Lucy's interest in the plan had also faded. She might have gone over to the city to school, but her mother would not consent to this for Marian, and had been very glad on the whole to accept Mrs. Matthews' proposal. The four girls got along companionably together under

Miss Ellis, and Marian had surprised them all by her quickness in catching up in spite of her handicap of lost schooling.

"It's really cold, but it can't be winter yet," said Lucy, thrusting her bare hands into her sweater pocket and looking reproachfully at the sun, which did not feel so warm as it used to.

"There's only a month and a half till Christmas, though," Marian reminded her. "When we began tying up the soldiers' Christmas packages last week it seemed awfully like winter, but Julia says maybe we'll have Indian summer yet."

"I never could make out when Indian summer comes. It's always coming soon and then the first thing you know there's a snow-storm," remarked Lucy, running up the piazza steps as she caught sight of her mother sitting inside the window.

Mrs. Gordon was reading a letter in the sitting-room, still wearing the hat and coat in which she had come from the Red Cross, and Lucy exclaimed as she entered the room:

"Oh, Mother, did you—is it from Bob?"

"Yes, sit down and we'll read it together," said Mrs. Gordon, looking up for a second from the closely-written sheets.

Bob's letters, arriving very erratically from France, sometimes two and three at a time and often weeks apart, were precious things these days,

and Lucy needed no second bidding. Marian, too, pulled off her blue velvet tam and sank down on the floor by Lucy's side while Mrs. Gordon recommenced the letter aloud.

"DEAR MOTHER AND ALL OF YOU:

"No news from home for a week, because I haven't been where I could get any, but hope to by to-morrow, when I shall have a chance to stop at my headquarters. I'll mail this then, too, if somebody doesn't turn up to take it in the meantime.

"It's three weeks to-day since I was transferred to the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, and I am just about beginning to realize how little I know, though it seems as if I had never worked so hard in my life. Behind the lines here—there's no use in my being more definite, for they wouldn't pass my letter—we beginners are kept at it, as long as there is daylight to work by, overhauling the airplanes after every flight, and learning their construction from end to end. I have been up twice as observer, both times with Benton—he's a wonder in the air. They are awfully short of observers here, and I draw pretty well, and know how to take pictures. But that is as far as I have got yet, and it seems very little when there is such a monstrous lot of work waiting to be done.

"We get plenty to eat, Mother, and if we didn't there's a little village right behind us where they sell you food for almost nothing,—they'd give it to us if we hadn't the money to pay. I think these are the kindest, friendliest people in the world.

They can't do enough to welcome us here, and it's funny how much friendship can be expressed without knowing each other's language. My French, as you know, is rather weak, but it's better than the enlisted men's,—still they seem to get what they want.

"Well, I must tell you the best piece of news I have. I met Dick Harding on the road day before yesterday, while I was marching a detachment from our squadron back to camp after an exercising hike. He was riding on reconnoitering duty with some other officers, so of course there wasn't much time. But when he saw me he pulled up and jumped off his horse, and I halted my men while we shook hands and grinned at each other and tried to get everything we wanted to say into about three minutes. I sure was glad to see him. He asked about you all and what I was doing and tried to arrange a meeting when we should be off duty, though that's always too uncertain to count on.

"He looks well, though a little thin. Of course I hadn't seen him since my furlough. He says his regiment—you know which it is—will go into the first line trenches this week. It has been declared in first-class condition and training, and mentioned already in home despatches. He is awfully proud about it, of course, and wants to show what they can do. It made me more than ever anxious to get somewhere in aviation. They need every one of us right now. He had to mount again almost at once to overtake the others, and I don't know when we can find each other, for we are ten miles apart even while he's behind the firing line.

"Father's regiment is somewhere in this sector, he told me."

"Oh, Lucy, wasn't it fine for Bob to see him!" Mrs. Gordon stopped reading to exclaim.

"Wasn't it?" said Lucy with shining eyes. "I've been hoping so they would meet. But go on, Mother, won't you?"

"There isn't much more," said Mrs. Gordon, turning to the last page.

"Don't worry about whether you are sending me the right things for Christmas. If I get some of Lucy's fudge I shall be thankful. We appreciate things so much more over here that it ought to be easier to choose them than when we were at home. Compared with the French we have so much just now. I hope the people back home won't forget that there are few families in this part of France who have any money left to buy presents for their own soldiers. But anyway, we'll share what we have with them. Nobody could help doing that.

"I have to get into my oiling togs now and go over a machine that has just come in. It's Benton's, and he has been flying over the German trenches. He came to the door of my place just then to say he was nearly frozen and was going to take a run to warm up. Our shacks are getting cold at night, too, but some of the men are out to-day cutting firewood.

"Good-bye, if I don't find time to write any more

to-day. I'm almost too sleepy at night to put anything like a sentence together. But I always think of you a lot.

"With much love,
"Bob."

"He never said whether our fruit cake came or not, Lucy," cried Marian, disappointed. "But perhaps it's waiting where the rest of his mail is," she reflected, tossing back her bright hair to look up inquiringly into Mrs. Gordon's face.

"Yes, probably it is, dear," Mrs. Gordon agreed, putting Bob's letter carefully back into its envelope. "I'm glad they have plenty to eat," she added with a smothered little sigh. "Lucy, call in William and we'll have lunch. Here comes Father now. He has to hurry off to-day to inspect supplies for these new recruits."

The post had seen a good many changes in the two months since Bob's regiment sailed. Many women of the Twenty-Eighth had packed up and gone away to their old homes or elsewhere. The new Infantry battalion had already been succeeded by another, and of the recruits of the early summer many were already overseas and all were trained men scattered to various regiments. Those drilling on the post now were not so numerous since the National Army camps had opened, though several hundred still remained in training, destined to fill

vacancies among the regulars. In October another regiment had camped overnight on Governor's Island to slip away to their transports at dawn. But this one had not been so fortunate as the Twenty-Eighth, and had sent back word of an uneasy passage made among attacking submarines in the midst of a heavy storm which almost drove the transports from their convoy.

Mr. Leslie was straining every nerve to supply his lumber for shipbuilding as fast as the government asked for it, and he wrote feelingly of the great difficulties in the way of transportation, but also of brave and patriotic efforts in the West to get the utmost accomplished. He wrote much, too, rather anxiously, about his prolonged absence, though he had been a good deal cheered by Marian's letters, which showed an increasing interest in her cousins and in the life of the post.

Marion had taken it on herself to help Lucy a little in the tasks that fell to her share while Margaret was their only servant, and after luncheon they went out together on the piazza to put it in order after William's playing circus there with the puppy most of the morning. William tried to help by picking up his blocks, but did not make much of a success of it and ended by sitting on the steps and holding Happy in his arms, while the puppy wriggled with wild curiosity to get down and find

out what a squirrel on the grass was burying with its quick little paws at the foot of a tree.

"No, you can't bother him. He has to get his meals buried for the winter," William scolded, struggling with the fat little beast, which was almost as strong as he was.

"Oh, let him go, William," said Lucy. "You know he's afraid of the squirrels when he gets near them. He just wants to prance around and bark at them."

"All right, then," said William, opening his arms and letting Happy go with a wild rush and scamper down the steps, which finished as usual in his backing hastily away from the angry, chattering squirrel before him, to stand furiously barking for a minute, then stopping short to wag his tail in the most friendly way as though peace had been declared.

"He's a fake," said Lucy laughing. "He can't expect to scare them after that."

Marian went indoors, when they had cleared things up, to take her daily nap, and Lucy followed her mother up-stairs and into her room.

"What are you going to do, Mother?" she asked uncertainly.

"Well, I think I'll mend some of William's clothes first," said Mrs. Gordon, sitting down beside her work-table. "Why, Lucy?"

"I just wanted to talk to you a few minutes,"

Lucy began, her face grown serious as she sat down and clasped her hands about one knee. "Mother, I feel like an awful good-for-nothing saying this, but I can't help it. I just have the blues terribly, and somehow it seems as though we were all waiting for dreadful things to happen, and nothing seems worth doing—at least nothing that I can do."

Lucy's burst of unhappiness did not seem to surprise her mother very much, though she laid down her work a moment and looked rather anxiously at her daughter as she answered.

"I know, Lucy. I'm afraid we all feel a little bit that way just now. It's a serious, worrying time for almost everybody, and the uncertainty of what lies before us is the hardest of all to bear. But you know, dear, if we give up being cheerful and brave we shan't get any work done and we'll feel worse than ever. Besides that, our letters to Bob will be anything but a comfort to him. We have got to find courage just as the women and girls of France and England did. And if you want useful work to do this winter besides our Red Cross, I will tell you of some right now."

"Oh, what, Mother? I'd like to pitch right in and do something with all my might!" cried Lucy from the depths of her eager, restless soul.

"You won't think much of it when you hear what it is," said Mrs. Gordon smiling. "There isn't any

glory in it, but I mean it when I say that it is something worth while. I want you to give up your time and thoughts to making Marian a healthy, happy girl before her father comes home."

"Oh, Mother," said Lucy, disappointed.

"I know it doesn't sound very inspiring, but take my word for it your reward will come if you do what lies in your way, and, Lucy, you never had a better chance to do something worth doing."

Lucy sat motionless, staring at the floor, like a statue in a blue serge sailor-suit. Her mother picked up her work again and began sewing a rip in William's rompers, while Lucy moved a little, unclasped her hands about her knee and took a turn in staring at the ceiling. Her face was not exactly gay, though no one could accuse her of sulkiness. She looked like a person thinking out a sum in arithmetic. At last she spoke.

"Well, Mother, I'll try. Are you quite sure about that reward?" she asked, smiling now as she turned to her mother with a rather mocking twinkle in her hazel eyes.

"Quite sure," said Mrs. Gordon, undismayed. "One way or another it will come." She smiled back at her daughter, well pleased with Lucy's answer, for she knew it to be as good as a promise, and its accomplishment would mean something gained not only for Marian but for Lucy as well.

"I'm not surprised that you took a minute to think it over," she continued seriously. "I know it won't be easy."

"Well, I said I wanted a tough job to tackle," said Lucy, rising from her chair with a faint sigh. "Don't expect any startling results," she warned her mother, breaking into another smile as she looked back at her. "I'll get Marian now and go over to the Red Cross for a while. I promised Julia."

Half an hour later, when the three girls were at work over a table of gauze in the Red Cross rooms, Lucy began wondering to herself, even while she talked of other things, how she was going to accomplish what she had undertaken. She glanced at Marian, whose golden head was industriously bent over her work, wishing rather helplessly for a wand which, with one quick wave, would transform Marian into a strong, active girl, with no nerves to bother about.

Any one spending the day at the Gordon house now would probably have seen little to find fault with in Marian and much that was attractive. Nobody gave her more credit than Lucy for the change in her during the past few months, which had turned Lucy's feeling for her cousin from pity to warm liking and even admiration. But the improvement had only begun, and it only persisted as long as

Marian was amused or interested or her sympathy aroused. There were still times of sulky indifference, of listless weariness, and most of all of obstinate refusal to help herself or exert her will to exercise or to eat her meals when she did not happen to feel like it. These were the hurdles in Lucy's way if she was to make Marian well and happy as every fourteen-year-old girl ought to be, and the obstacles loomed rather large just now, even with Marian before her in her brightest mood, and looking so pretty as she laughed and talked while her fingers worked that no one would have credited her with a single pout.

Unconsciously Lucy commenced the best way, for as she listened to Marian telling Julia the story of Happy's complete destruction of her best hat, Lucy summed up two great qualities in Marian's favor, and began to feel a wider understanding and sympathy with her cousin for thinking of them. Marian was extremely generous. She loved to give things away, and the loss of any of her own possessions worried her very little, or if as in this case it was a disappointment, she bore it good-humoredly. She even gave the puppy a forgiving pat with the poppies torn from her hat still clenched in his wicked jaws. Here Lucy skipped to the second point in her catalogue of virtues. Marian was certainly not vain or even conscious of her beauty.

Beyond a careful regard for her appearance which had been taught her since babyhood, she gave little thought to herself and laughed in honest amusement if Lucy grew enthusiastic sometimes when her pretty little cousin put on something especially becoming.

Occupied with these thoughts, Lucy did not get so much work done as the others, besides being rather silent, and provokingly failing to answer several times when she was spoken to.

"Lucy Gordon, you've only made fifteen compresses, and you have been quiet enough to work, goodness knows," said Julia at last, looking at her friend with accusing eyes. "Of course if you're thinking out how to end the war or something really important to the country we won't disturb you, but you might think aloud. I'd like to hear it."

Lucy laughed. "My ideas would be almost as valuable as our parole man's. He is always telling Margaret what he thinks of the war. The other day I was out in the kitchen making fudge for Bob —— Oh, dear," she interrupted herself, "it will be so stale when he gets it if he only goes for his mail every week or two!"

"But what were you going to say?" insisted Julia, as Lucy seemed to have subsided.

"Oh, only that I listened to Mat talking to Margaret in the pantry. He said, 'You see, it's this

way. Either the Eye-talians will be able to stay where they are, or they will have to retreat.' I felt like telling him that maybe Margaret could have thought that out for herself, but she seemed quite impressed by it."

"Is she nice? Do you like her?" asked Julia. "I don't see her often the way I used to Elizabeth."

"Oh, she's nice," said Lucy. "She's kind of poky, and of course Father thinks Karl is the only person in the world who makes good coffee, but Margaret almost suits him. We do miss Elizabeth awfully, though. William simply can't get used to having her gone. He asked me yesterday if I thought Elizabeth would like Happy when she came back. He doesn't seem to get it through his head that she isn't coming back."

"She might, though, Lucy, when the war is over," suggested Marian.

"Yes—when," said Lucy without much enthusiasm, thinking of Bob.

"Have you any idea where they are now?" asked Julia, beginning to pile up her finished work.

"No, not a bit. Elizabeth said something to me the day she left about going to Sweden, but I don't really think she knew. Karl told Father they might go to Mexico. She sent William a post-card from Boston a few days after they left here."

"Let's stop now and go outdoors," proposed Julia, pushing back her chair. "I'm so tired of sitting still I'm getting fidgety."

"Let's go out and teach Marian to play golf," said Lucy, taking her bull by the horns.

"Yes! Will you come, Marian?" urged Julia. "We'll only play a little while until it gets dark. I know you'll like it."

"I'll come along and watch you, anyway," hedged Marian, reaching for her hat and not looking especially eager for a new effort.

"But it's no fun watching, and you'd love it so if you only once got interested," insisted Lucy, as the three got up and found their hats and sweaters. "I wish Bob had stayed long enough to teach you! He said he would and maybe you'd have let him. Come on, so we can write and tell him how much you've done—won't you?"

They had reached the foot of the stairs to the first floor by the time Lucy finished her appeal, and as they stepped outdoors Marian demanded with a sudden, fleeting smile:

"If I play this once, Lucy, will you let me alone afterward?"

"I promise," said Lucy promptly. with unshaken confidence in her favorite game. "It's you who won't let me alone then."

CHAPTER VIII

OVER THE TRENCHES

While Lucy's thoughts were so much with Bob across the seas he was wrapped up heart and soul in the work in which he longed to excel. Not but that an hour came every day when he thought of home and longed for those who waited for him, but the hour was a short one, for he needed all the time he could spare for sleep, to keep his brain alert and clear as an aviator's must be who does not court disaster.

Not that Bob was an aviator yet, after eight weeks of training, but he began to be called upon pretty frequently by Captain Benton to accompany him in his flights. Bob's duty as observer was to sit in front of the pilot, with a map fastened on a board laid across his knees, and keep a close watch of the country over which they flew, usually as nearly adjacent to the enemy's lines as possible, noting every change in the German positions which might be of value, such as new trenches, roads, railways, hidden artillery or machine-gun emplacements. With powerful field-glasses he scrutinized the earth below, hastily sketching in on his map any

alterations observable, as well as keeping a sharp lookout for exploding shrapnel aimed too accurately in their direction.

Bob was an excellent draughtsman, the second in his class at West Point, and for the honor of accompanying Benton he practised his sketching at every random opportunity. Together the two flew repeatedly over the German lines, sometimes retiring swiftly before pursuing guns, sometimes getting just the information they wanted and returning triumphant. Bob was becoming an expert mechanic, and he looked forward with boundless eagerness to the time when he should be a fearless pilot like Benton, for he had learned with joy in the past month that the "grit and steady endurance" his father had spoken of were really his.

Meanwhile in Benton's two-seated biplane he scouted over numberless French villages, and grew to have a knowledge of the battle-front stamped on his mind with the geometrical exactness of a map of the earth seen from thousands of feet in the air. Benton was known not only to his friends but to the Germans as well, where his reputation was firmly established as an enemy worthy of respect. His airplane was watched for, and its easy, graceful evolutions marked out at once by anti-aircraft gunners. But Benton was not fond of bravado, and he took few unnecessary risks. His dangerous

flights were made in safety, and Bob's confidence in the air daily increased.

All during November he and Benton worked together outside of Bob's hours of practice and study, and the last of the month found them firm friends and pretty constant companions.

It was on November 24th, at about seven in the morning, that an orderly brought word to Bob, at breakfast in the mess shack, that Captain Benton wished to see him. Bob swallowed his coffee, went out and found Benton standing in the field by his airplane, looking carefully over the wire supports.

"Sorry to hurry you, Gordon," he said pleasantly as Bob came up, "but I want to get off at once if you can manage it. They just telephoned us that the Germans have fortified the village of Petit-Bois, up the valley there, for their expected retreat, and information is wanted of their defenses as soon as possible."

"I'm ready," said Bob. "Five minutes to get my camera plates and stuff." He was dressed for flying, in fur-lined service coat, and it only remained to fetch gloves and fur helmet from his shack.

The morning was dull and cloudy, with a raw coldness in the air. To Bob one of the delights of an early start was to fly up into the rays of the morning sun. But to-day when, ten minutes later,

they mounted toward the east, the cold, gray clouds seemed endlessly banked above them, and Bob picked up the speaking tube to say, doubtfully:

"Not much photography to-day, Benton. Did you expect it?"

"No," Benton replied. "We shan't be able to get within range for that unless they are all asleep."

At eight thousand feet an airplane is almost safe from rifle or machine-gun fire. But at this height no photographs of any value can be taken. To fly at four or five hundred feet over the enemy would be ideal for observing and photography, but would mean almost certain death to pilot and observer. So an unsatisfactory middle course of two to four thousand feet is usually adopted. Benton did not hesitate to fly low where he could gain valuable information, but he was usually prudent.

Bob's map was spread across his knees, and as they neared the German lines he scrutinized with his glasses the outskirts of the village they approached. Nothing new seemed to require closer attention here. Benton circled and flew behind the village, rising a hundred feet higher as black, white and yellow puffs of smoke appearing from below indicated enemy guns aimed at the tiny target the biplane offered. Suddenly Bob stiffened.

"Ah! Here we have it!" he cried exultantly. "A nice new line of concrete block-houses, Benton,

right behind the village—their second line of defense. Fly a little lower, can't you?"

"No," called back the pilot with his usual calmness, "but we'll go a bit further north, so you can find out the extent of the line. Those gunners don't seem very clever yet, but they're getting closer."

Bob sketched for dear life while the machine floated and hovered. Below in a narrow strip of woodland beyond the village he could distinguish plainly the tiny bald spots that marked the hastily constructed fortifications.

"Good, we're losing them," remarked Benton, glancing down. "The clouds have hidden us, I think."

Below them a swirling fog bank sheltered the airplane a moment from the gunners, but it also began to cut off Bob's view, and Benton had to dodge and circle for openings in the misty curtain.

"Why, we're above the village—there are the trenches," said Bob presently. "Cut back south—it's clearer now. Blessed if we haven't got the best bit of information this month," he added joyfully. "Can't get everything in one trip, but this is enough to help if the Boches retreat this week, and it looks to every one as though they meant to."

Bob's enthusiastic fingers pressed too hard and the lead of his pencil snapped. He felt in his pocket

for another, thinking oddly of Lucy as he did so, for she had always come to him when he was at home to sharpen her pencils. It usually took Lucy several pencils to get through an arithmetic lesson. He rubbed his bare hand against the pocket lining, for the air was nipping cold.

"Huh!" said Benton suddenly.

Bob could not hear him, but he felt the airplane sharply veer. He seized the speaking tube and shouted, "What's the matter?"

For a second he thought Benton had been hit, for shrapnel was again bursting near them at intervals, and he glanced quickly toward the steering gear. By means of the dual control the observer, in case of accident to the pilot, can bring the airplane safely to ground.

"Don't know," said Benton sharply, "but we're not getting enough gas. You pick out a landing-place for us in double-quick time, if you don't want to land in those tree-tops." His cool voice was shaken with furious disgust—the steady, swift race of the engine had grown jerky and uneven.

Bob heard it and understood. With frenzied haste he searched the landscape with his glasses, growing suddenly cold beneath his clothes at thought of the dizzy depth below.

"There's a meadow just to the left," he said at last, "north of the village—see it? It's the only

decent place in sight—but, Benton—it's behind the German lines."

"Don't I know it?" said Benton gruffly. "Then here goes." He cut off the spark, and the airplane began to fall.

Bob had snatched his map from the board and folded it closely. He drew now from a box at his feet a pearly white carrier pigeon and, fastening the map to her leg by a rubber band, stroked her once and tossed her high in the air. No matter what happened to them his morning's observations would safely reach the squadron's camp.

They were barely four hundred feet above the earth now, and the continued firing of the German guns behind them seemed to indicate that in the misty atmosphere the enemy had not seen their descent and was still searching for them in the heights.

"All right, pretty good place—down we go," said Benton, peering out ahead. In another moment the machine touched the grass of the meadow and coasted along it to the shelter of a little grove of firs near the farther end.

"Somewhere in France," remarked Benton grimly, taking off his goggles and staring around him. "Only it begins to look more like somewhere in Germany."

"There's nobody in sight," said Bob, stepping

out on to the grass. "I should think we were several miles north of the village."

"Not more than two," declared Benton, taking off his gloves and turning up the ear flaps of his helmet preparatory to bending over the engine. He took another swift glance around, frowning. "They may have seen us come down and they may not, but we'll have to take it for granted that they didn't, and do our work with that idea. If the trouble is in the feed pipe, as I think it is, we ought to make repairs in an hour or two. It isn't but ten o'clock now." He looked up at the sun, which was dimly visible through the heavy clouds. "If it will only stay thick and hazy we'll have a fair chance of escaping notice in case any one happens along in this field."

"There's a house behind those trees," said Bob doubtfully, nodding toward the woods on their right. "It looks like a farmer's cottage. You can't see it now, but I caught sight of the chimney while we were making our landing."

"Well, it can't be helped," said Benton coolly. "Our only chance is to fix up and get away before they see us."

He had his tools out and was ready to engross himself in the task before him. Not for nothing had this famous pilot been brought up on a Wyoming cattle ranch, where calm thought and quick

action had saved his life more than once in his boyhood. With a strong probability of never finishing his repairs he set to work with as matter-of-fact thoroughness as though he were in his own air-drome.

"Come on, Gordon—unscrew these unions for me," he ordered, tossing a tool in Bob's direction.

Bob was feeling, to say the least of it, rather excited. During his three months of service abroad he had not yet come face to face with a German soldier otherwise than disarmed and a prisoner. He had encountered plenty of shell and rifle fire in his flights over the enemy trenches, but that was his nearest approach to the battle-field. Now, as he peered around the meadow, over which the mist still lingered, he half expected to see a crowd of armed Prussians bursting at him from among the trees, and his heart beat a most unhero-like tattoo as he turned to the airplane and began unscrewing with nervous haste.

In half an hour Benton had found the trouble and set about remedying it as best he could, but he growled now over his work, and searched his box of spare parts dejectedly. "It will just do," he told Bob as they toiled on with all the speed allowable for a good job. "It ought to get us back to camp safe enough, but unfortunately we can't fly like the crow—not by daylight."

"How do you mean?" asked Bob, straightening his bent back a moment. He was beginning to feel more hopeful, for the work was nearly done, even if not altogether satisfactory, and they were still quite unmolested.

"I mean that we can't start now, as I'd like to, and fly back to camp. They're on the lookout for us, you may be sure. We'd have to dodge and cut around their guns, and you see we can't. I wouldn't risk a single loop with that engine, though for just the straight distance we can chance it. What I mean is this—we've got to wait for darkness, or near it, and then cut back directly over the trenches."

"I see," said Bob, with marked lack of enthusiasm.

Benton grinned. "Doesn't sound very promising to you, does it? Cheer up; if only we can hide here until dark we'll get home safe enough. When this job is done we'll push her further in under the trees. The place seems to be quite deserted. Probably the cow that was pastured here has gone into German stomachs long ago."

Bob nodded agreement, since showing his doubts of their safety would not help matters. He guessed, too, that Benton knew them as well as he. In another hour the engine was repaired to the best of their ability, the airplane pushed under a sheltering

fir, and Benton seated on the ground beside it, lighting his pipe.

Bob sat down, too, and wiped the oil from his hands with a wisp of grass. He felt a sudden keen longing for action to put out of his mind the long hours they must spend in hiding, with the expectation every moment of being surprised. He was not blessed with Benton's calm patience. To be in the thick of a fight or engaged on a hazardous piece of work was something he could tackle bravely, but waiting for the unknown was getting on his nerves.

"Benton, I want to take a look around," he said, rising to his feet after a moment. "I'll keep among the trees right near you."

"Well, if you must," Benton acquiesced. "Don't go far. I suppose if the Boches are looking for us they'll find us just the same, hiding or not."

"I won't be gone half an hour," promised Bob, edging his way among the tree-trunks, his face turned toward the north end of the meadow.

The mist still hung about the woodland, and the bark of the trees he touched was wet and clammy. He walked on for about five hundred yards, then stopped to listen. Distant firing was the only sound that broke the silence except for the occasional drip of water from the bare branches of the oaks or the green boughs of the fir trees.

He went on a little further, then stopped again, irresolute. There was nothing to be gained by wandering further, and he might lose his way if the mist closed in again. He certainly could not risk having to shout to Benton for guidance. But he thought disgustedly of the feeble ending to their morning's expedition, with the best to be hoped for a scared retreat to camp after nightfall. The map was safely there by now, but Bob would have given almost anything at that moment to be able to add to the information it contained by some discovery near at hand. The attack of nerves he had suffered after their landing had cleared his mind of its weakness, and now his heart was beating normally and his courage was good. Bob was far from having an envious nature, but his admiration for Benton's exploits had kindled his own ambition, and the chance nearness to the German second-line positions made him fairly ache with longing to do his corps some brilliant service. Yet rack his brains as he might he could not discover any way toward the accomplishment of his desire. While he stood wishing, a footstep sounded close beside him.

Bob stopped breathing, frozen to the spot. Then he began slowly backing away, but the unknown's feet had passed from the soft moss to a crackling stick very near at hand and only a shaggy fir tree separated him from Bob's view.

Bob was keyed up at that moment to expect no less than Von Hindenburg himself, and the relief was almost overwhelming when a little old man in a blue peasant's blouse stepped into sight, carrying a pail of water. He nearly dropped it when he came face to face with Bob, and stopped mouth open and eyes staring. Bob was almost as much overcome himself at the encounter with even this simple old countryman, and it was the latter who brought his pail carefully to the ground and first spoke.

"*Anglais?*" he asked, his voice quavering with astonishment, and his eyes wandering all over Bob as though puzzled beyond words at his presence.

Bob shook his head, regaining his composure a little, "*Americain.*"

"Ah!" cried the little Frenchman, his face lighting up in answer to the word, "*Americain!*" Then in a sudden burst of joyful enthusiasm he cried with a smile that brought out a hundred wrinkles in his thin old face, "*Soyez le bienvenu!*"

"*Merci!*" responded Bob, warming to the friendly greeting, and he held out his hand to the old man, who shook it timidly. Then he burst into a sudden volley of words, gesticulating wildly with his arms as he spoke and, so far as Bob could understand, inquiring how on earth he had got there,

"YOU MAY HELP THE ALLIES TO VICTORY"

since evidently the Germans still held their positions firmly.

Bob heartily wished he had taken his West Point French more seriously as he strained his ears, unused to any such fluency. But he summoned his wits and managed to understand somehow and to answer at least intelligibly.

"I and my fellow-officer were forced to come down behind the German lines," he explained. "We are hiding until dark, when we can get away." As he struggled with his French Bob felt uneasy enough at having revealed himself, though looking at the peasant's honest open face beaming with friendliness he could not feel that he had exposed himself and Benton to any imminent danger of betrayal. But while he talked another thought occurred to him.

"Have you seen the new forts beyond the village?" he asked. "Will you tell me how far they go? Perhaps you may help the Allies to victory."

The old man scratched his cheek thoughtfully and finally shook his head. "I can tell only what I have guessed, Monsieur, for I do not go near the fortifications, nor even to the village, often. I feel safer here," he added, nodding his head toward the cottage that Bob had noticed buried in the trees. "It is almost a ruin now," he said sadly, "but the Boches seldom come there."

"Well, what have you guessed?" urged Bob eagerly.

"That the forts run far above the town. They have set guards all through the woods to the north to keep the townfolk from wandering there. Beyond that," he shrugged his old shoulders dejectedly, "I do not know."

Bob's brain began to seethe with a sudden determination. Before he had stopped to think whether it had wisdom in it—and not having Lucy on hand to urge caution—he said impulsively:

"I want to see them if I can. Could you—will you lend me those clothes you wear while I go quickly into the village and return? I will pay you well for them." As he spoke he drew from the pocket inside his coat some pieces of silver.

The old peasant stared again, then his blue eyes softened. "I will lend them to you gladly," he said, drawing back from the offering with a friendly smile.

"I know," urged Bob, following him, "but I have money and you have none. Take this for friendship's sake, at least," he said, as nearly as his French could frame the words.

The old man hesitated no longer, but took the money with a grateful look and a sigh of wonder at the few franc pieces in his hand.

"Many thanks, Monsieur l'Americain," he

nodded. "Will you wait here until I bring the clothes, or will you come with me to my house?"

Bob thought swiftly of Benton, with whom he must certainly have a word before he started out on what the older man would be likely to call a wild goose chase. Again he felt the risk of so implicitly trusting a simple old fellow who might presumably be frightened into a betrayal, but his confidence somehow remained unshaken. The man must not be led into his danger either. He thought hard.

"I'll meet you near your house, so you need not come back so far. Can you think of a place?"

"Yes," said the old man after a moment; "my little shed where I cut wood is at the edge of the thicket. You have only to walk on a quarter of a mile from here to come to it."

"But how about the Boches? Could they not see me?"

"No—no. There are none near here. They have little reason for coming. You are safe enough. But," he added, a sudden alarm springing into his mild eyes, "when you put on these clothes," he touched his faded blouse, "you are a spy, Monsieur. Have you forgotten that?"

"No," said Bob calmly, although to tell the truth he disliked to hear the word. "I'll risk that. No one knows me here. Say in a quarter of an hour,

then, I'll meet you at your wood-shed." He smiled good-bye to the little figure stooping again over the pail, and turned back through the trees with a great excitement quickening his pulses, though his determination had been so calmly taken.

Benton was still sitting beside his airplane, only now he leaned forward in an attitude of expectancy when Bob's cautious footstep sounded in the wood. At sight of him he settled back again, inquiring with mild mockery, "Well, did you persuade the Germans to confide anything to you? Wish you'd ask them where that new road is they've camouflaged out of sight. Tell 'em we've spent a week looking for it."

"Didn't see any," said Bob, refusing to be teased. "Look here, Benton, what I did see was a French peasant who was no end friendly, and whose clothes I borrowed to go on a little tour of inspection in the village."

"What! In the village—in the fellow's clothes?" exclaimed Benton, staring. "You must be just plain ass, Gordon."

Bob laughed. "No, I'm not. Would you think so if I learned what we want to know about the block-houses before it's dark enough to start? All this worry and danger would have amounted to something then. I sure want to find out a little of their scheme."

Benton frowned at the big tree in front of him. "You know what you'll get if you are caught—out of uniform?"

"But I'm not exactly well-known in that village. I'm no familiar figure like yourself. There haven't been any pictures of me in the papers. Besides, I won't be gone more than an hour or two. I can't see any great risk in it, and, Benton, think of what I may learn!"

"I know it, and I wouldn't thank any man who kept me from doing a smart bit of work. But look here, even if you are not suspected you might be detained as being of military age. How would you like to be sent into Germany as a factory hand?"

"I can easily pass for seventeen—the class France had not called out when Petit-Bois was taken. There are lots of those fellows around, and it isn't likely they'd choose me to kidnap during a single hour."

"Well, go ahead, Gordon, but not with my approval. It's a nasty business."

"I feel sure I'll come out all right," said Bob, a courageous confidence growing in him as he spoke. "Just wish me luck and I'll bet we'll meet again before it's time to go."

"I wish you the best of luck, old man," said Benton, rising to his feet and shaking Bob warmly by

the hand. "I'll wait for you until dark. I can't stay longer."

"That's long enough," said Bob, and with a final hand-clasp he retraced his venturesome steps into the wood.

CHAPTER IX

BEHIND THE ENEMY'S LINES

In the village of Petit-Bois, on the street leading to the church, lived a grocer named Adler, a German by birth, who had plied his trade there for almost ten years before the war forced him to leave French territory. He was not kept away for long, however, for within a few weeks his countrymen had overrun Belgium and enough of northern France to include Petit-Bois, so Herr Adler came back and resumed business, with more Germans than French now for customers. He was a widower and lived alone until his uncle and aunt had come to Petit-Bois a month ago to keep him company. The grocery had become prosperous of late, since the victorious army had trebled the population of the village, and the grocer was glad of help in the time his uncle could spare from his work as company cook in an Infantry regiment. He was pleased also at having for lodger a relative in the army. Adler's aunt sat mostly in her room over the grocery knitting socks, except when she was called to wait upon customers in the shop.

She was seated there now in the early winter afternoon, the needles moving swiftly in her nimble fingers, though her eyes were not on her work but turned toward the window through which bare branches showed, and low, red roofs beneath the sullen, cloudy sky. Elizabeth was paler and thinner than she had been when the Gordons last saw her, and her face was serious and sad as she looked off into the distance. It was not her journeyings since leaving America that had wearied her—the journey into Mexico, the long sea voyage from Santa Cruz to Copenhagen, and again the tedious way from Denmark into Germany. It was the weeks passed in her native land which had done most to sadden her cheerful spirit.

The month she had spent in Germany had been strangely hard, and lately she had stayed more and more at work by herself, absorbed in perplexing and anxious thoughts. The grief and suffering she saw daily about her, without power to alleviate it, hurt her kind heart, and the great war seemed further than ever from her simple understanding. She saw Karl filling once more a humble place in Germany's mighty army, with a steadily growing pride in the victorious onslaught of which he had become a part. She heard the name of Germany and of German conquest on every tongue, or saw a silent witness of it in the vanquished people

around her, and still her heart did not feel that overpowering thrill at her country's greatness that in Karl had been so quickly awakened. Elizabeth went among the Germans of the village and spoke with them in her native tongue. She worked willingly at warm garments for the soldiers and helped her nephew at every opportunity, but with a quiet sadness and reserve that any one who had known the old Elizabeth would have quickly wondered at.

The neighbors often asked her about her life in America, usually with bitter words and marveling at her safe return.

"How fortunate you were, Frau Müller, to get off so easily! I suppose our poor countrymen are suffering much at the hands of the Yankees now. Did you contrive long for your escape?"

Elizabeth had smiled the first time such questions were put to her, and had told frankly of the freedom with which she and Karl had left America. But later she did not go into such details, for she saw that she was not fully believed and that, moreover, her story lost interest since it contained no accusations against America.

She had heard before in Germany words of suspicion and dislike expressed against England, and she had not been familiar enough with England or English people to resent or disbelieve them. But

she had spent a good part of the last twenty years in America, and had known too much happiness and kind companionship there to feel indifferent when malicious lies were told about its people. She had lived, too, much of that time, in the army, and knew enough of its officers and soldiers and their families not to be deceived into believing them greedy, money-mad or bloodthirsty, according to the imagination of her informer.

This sort of stupid abuse made Elizabeth acutely unhappy, and hurt her confidence in her native land, for which she had long had the tenderest affection. So rather than engage in arguments with strangers she remained alone a good part of the time and worked peacefully at her sewing and knitting, hoping, with as much cheerfulness as she could summon, for better days to come.

She was pondering again over these troubling thoughts as she sat by the window, deeply wishing that she could go back to her native town in Bavaria and talk to the old pastor she had known in her youth. He had never outgrown for her the wisdom she had seen in him when he had married her to Karl, with much kind and shrewd advice for both of them. She smiled at the thought of it as she bent over the heel of her sock. Suddenly heavy footsteps sounded on the stairs and the door was opened. Elizabeth looked up in surprise.

"Is it you, Karl, home so early?" she asked as her husband came quickly in and crossed the room to her side.

He wore the German private's gray uniform as cook to an Infantry company, and his rather stout figure had trimmed down wonderfully since he put it on. He looked almost young and soldierly. But his face just now was red and hot, and his black eyes blazed with excitement.

"Whom do you think I have seen?" he shouted, pointing a shaking finger at his wife as though to assure her earnest attention. "I have seen a spy from the American army across there with the French, and whom do you think it was? It was Bob Gordon!"

Elizabeth turned deathly pale. Her knitting slipped unnoticed from her hands and she stared at Karl speechlessly until he shook her by the shoulder, crying:

"Come! Don't be so stupid! I want that picture you have of him. Where is it? I must show it to my captain, so he will be convinced it is the right man when we have taken him. He was wandering about the border of the village, just entering it. He has got across the lines somehow, in a farmer's old clothes. Pretty smart! But not so smart that I didn't recognize him—our fine young officer! He won't get back so easily, for I

have sent warnings to all the pickets beyond the wood."

Karl was fairly quivering with eagerness. He saw glory awaiting him around the corner—the precious words of praise from his superior, the possible decoration, which are life itself to the zealous German soldier, and which he puts before every impulse of humanity or independence.

"Hurry!" he urged angrily, astonished at Elizabeth's white-faced silence. "I want to take him on the road by the fortifications. Think what it means to us who were half accused of being friendly to America! Could there be better proof than this of our loyalty?"

Elizabeth's pale lips could hardly form the words she tried to utter. Her throat choked her, but desperately she strove against the horror that seized her and pleaded tremblingly, "Oh, Karl, not a spy—not a spy!"

Karl frowned, staring at her with hard eyes, but she faltered, "You won't give him up, Karl? Not Mr. Bob, our old friend!"

"What else would I do?" Karl demanded, thrusting out both arms in an excited gesture. "Would you have me betray the Fatherland?"

Elizabeth found her tongue at last and rose to face her husband. Her thin face was flushed and her eyes shining.

"Karl, it is not only you who love Germany," she said earnestly. "I would not betray her to our enemies, but, Karl, you know well that there is nothing here for Mr. Bob to learn. Only the fortifications are secret, and he will never be allowed near them by the guard. You know they would shoot him before he reached them, as they shot that poor, deaf old man the other day. Tell him to go, Karl. Tell him never, on his word, to spy again, as the price of his safety. No, wait," she begged, as Karl showed impatient signs of interrupting her. "Do it for the debt we owe America. Have you forgotten the long, happy years we spent there? Often I think of my kind mistress and of Mr. Bob when he was a little child. Do you remember the day long ago when he fell off his horse, how you picked him up and carried him in the house? You were pale that day yourself, and when he opened his eyes you said, 'Thank God.' You were very ill ten years ago, when the Major had you cared for like his friend and your life was saved. Don't we owe them anything, Karl, that you are so ready to harm them?"

Karl's brows had unbent a little as he listened to Elizabeth's plea, and when he answered it was less arrogantly, though his voice was still hard and self-assured.

"Yes, wife, I know. But you reason stupidly.

I cannot make you see beyond your finger-tips. Our service in America was good, and we were friends with the Major's family. I served him faithfully. But now we are at war, and Germany's enemies are ours. I am now a soldier and Mr. Bob is a soldier, too. That is an end to all talk of friendship. Keep your pity for our own people, and forget all gratitude to those who are against us. America and the sons of America are less than nothing to you now."

Karl's face was set, and his eyes gleamed at thought of the praise and honor awaiting him with Bob's capture. No persuasion on earth could have turned him aside from his purpose, and to his excited mind it lost all trace of selfish ambition and became the loftiest patriotism.

Elizabeth closed her lips despairingly and looked at him with sad eyes. But his forbearance was now quite at an end.

"Give me the picture!" he cried, shaking her thin shoulder. "Must I treat you roughly to get it? Where is your obedience?"

Elizabeth made no more protests. She walked with heavy steps to the old bureau and pulled open a drawer. From the depths of a worn leather pocketbook she drew out the little photograph and, without one glance at it, handed it to her husband.

Karl snatched it eagerly from her hand, and

looked at it closely, holding it to the light. He started to tear off the figures of Lucy and William, but reflecting that it would be better to show the picture unmutilated, he thrust it quickly inside his blouse and went out of the room.

Elizabeth stood by the bureau motionless for a moment, then mechanically she straightened the crocheted cover where Karl had brushed against it. She had crocheted it herself two years ago at Governor's Island, while Lucy was recovering from the measles, sitting beside her in the darkened room. She went slowly over to the window, staring out unseeingly. In her painful bewilderment she prayed for help and guidance to know what she should do, and as her lips moved she felt her mind made up beyond any faltering.

She turned to the wall where a woolen shawl hung, and, hesitating no longer, took it down and wrapped it about her head and shoulders. Her face was calm and quiet now with the strength of her resolution. She descended to the shop and found Herr Adler seated there, casting up his accounts, for it was Saturday afternoon.

"Good-day, Aunt," he nodded, raising his blond head at sight of her. "Will you stay here for a while and attend to the customers while I do my figuring? My uncle has gone off somewhere in a great hurry."

"First I must go out and see Frau Bauer," said Elizabeth, smiling pleasantly at her nephew. "I promised to come before the week is out. In half an hour I will be back and help you gladly." She replaced a few potatoes which had fallen from the basket and walked out into the street. Once outside she quickened her pace a little and turned off in the direction of the fortified road behind the village.

* * * * * * *

Bob had lingered in the woods a while after putting on the peasant's clothes, trying to feel at home in them before he showed himself in the village. But the disguise was complete enough to any one unfamiliar with his face, and sure to escape notice by its very commonplaceness.

"If they see that you are a stranger they will take you for a marketer from the countryside," the old Frenchman had assured him. "They come from a day's journey off now, because the land is untilled beneath the shell-fire, north and south of us."

Bob entered Petit-Bois about noon, skirting the edge of it until he could get enough idea of its streets to seem passably familiar with the ones leading to the farther end of the village. His cap was pulled down over his eyes, and his clumsy shoes

no longer impeded his steps as they had done at first. He bent his shoulders forward too, with a suggestion of physical unfitness.

Thrusting his hands into his pockets he walked along at a good rate on a pretty, tree-bordered street, until he reached the center of the village with its shops and red-roofed houses, one or two of them damaged by shell-fire, beyond which the little, spired church showed against the gray sky. Not many people were on the streets and the few were mostly German soldiers off duty, wearing an air of self-importance which contrasted strongly with the hasty and anxious looks of the French women, children and occasional men who went about such business as they had. What might have marked Bob out for notice was his fresh color and the clear eyes shaded beneath his cap, for terror and privation had taken the healthy bloom from the French country-folk, and even the children wore a serious, apprehensive look as they hurried by, wrapped in their scanty shawls against the biting air.

Bob did not linger, having no desire to remain in a crowd, and possessed by one idea—to see all he could and get away as soon as possible. He went on up the street, passed the church, and turning into a lane found himself presently at the eastern end of the village. Along its outskirts a road ran at right angles to the principal street, and as Bob

reached it he saw, to his discomfort, a German sentry walking guard. Beyond the little grove of oaks just back of the road Bob's fancy pictured with eager certainty one of the concrete block-houses, or machine-gun emplacements that formed the projected second line of defense. He stepped out on to the road and immediately received a threatening gesture of the sentry's bayonet, eloquent enough, though the man was some distance from him, accompanied by a thumb pointed vigorously back in the direction of the village. Bob turned unwillingly into the lane again, frowning at the oak grove before he strolled slowly away from it.

"Fine chance I have of seeing anything," he thought, fuming, as he shuffled along. "I don't make a very dangerous spy."

He returned to the church, found a second by-way and made for another part of the forbidden road. This way was not so deserted as the lane he had left, and as he passed a dozen people he quickened his pace a little, thinking his idle wandering might look suspicious. He was the less conspicuous, though, as many of the villagers were wandering about themselves with little object. Their livelihood gone, their hearts wrung with grief or anxiety, they seemed to have little purpose in their actions, and those who met Bob's eyes looked at him with dull indifference, or at most with a mild

curiosity. The German soldiers left them unmolested, so far as Bob could see. Even the most brutal, he guessed, had seen enough of abusing an unarmed and helpless population. Once an officer passed quickly by, having the whole road to himself by unanimous consent of the other pedestrians. He was a tall, powerful-looking man, a captain, as Bob saw by a glance at his shoulder. It went severely against the grain to salute him, but Bob could not risk being brought into notice by a reprimand and he raised his hand briskly with the others. The officer did not condescend to return the salute, but his eyes passed over Bob's shabby figure indifferently, which was all Bob wanted.

As he neared the road again he peered across it as well as he could before coming under the sentry's gaze, and to his delight he saw plainly a square, white spot rising slightly from the ground in the moss among the tree-trunks. He hastily calculated the distance between this lane and the other and decided that the block-houses were at least a hundred yards apart. His sketches made from the airplane were fairly accurate, and would be of great service when the looked-for retreat commenced from the hard-pressed German lines before the village. He was consumed with a desire to get nearer the road, but the few houses along the lane had already ended, and it was empty except for himself. He

felt that it would be going too far to show himself again to the sentry appearing from a second deserted road. To the left he heard the sound of drums and caught sight of a big farmhouse not far off, which, to judge from the crowd of soldiers gathering about its yard, had been turned into a barracks.

It was, of course, something to have verified his observations of the morning, and he had a pretty good idea of what protection the houses of the village would afford an army defending the second line, but Bob was far from satisfied as he once more neared the church. He glanced up at the spire, wondering if by hook or by crook, or by any of those marvelous schemes that seem easy enough when you read about them, he could get up inside the belfry and use the glasses carefully hidden under his blouse. While he gazed up, blinking at the mist-covered sun, a hand laid quickly on his arm made him jump in spite of all his self-control. He turned, expecting he knew not what, to see a thin, little woman with a shawl drawn like a hood over her face.

A house close by them had been partly shattered by shell-fire, and a gaping hole still showed in the wall. "Come in here," she whispered, and drew Bob inside the wrecked door out of sight of passers-by.

"Mr. Bob," said Elizabeth, pushing back her

shawl and showing her haggard, frightened face. "Oh, Mr. Bob, why did you come here? Go quickly away, I beg you—for your mother's sake!"

"Elizabeth!" said Bob, staring unbelievingly at the troubled face before him. Then as the shock of her recognition of him outweighed his curiosity he asked, bewildered, "Who knows I am here? Have you told any one?"

"Karl saw you," said Elizabeth, wringing her hands in her helpless terror. "He will give you up, Mr. Bob, but I could not stay and nothing do after he told me. Your mother's eyes came sorrowfully before me, and I must help you if I can. But, oh, Mr. Bob, if without your uniform they take you! Get back while yet there is time, if some way you know!"

"Karl—here? What a chance!" Bob muttered, his brain on fire now with the impulse of his desperate need.

"It is not chance, Mr. Bob," said Elizabeth heavily. "His regiment was here sent when the Americans joined the French across the line. Karl could choose this or one other regiment, but here he came because my nephew asked him. You will believe me?" Her face was beseeching in its tearful earnestness, lest Bob should not take her warning with instant seriousness.

"Oh, I believe you, Elizabeth—it isn't that!"

Bob assured her, darting a glance into the street. "Thank you a thousand times," he stammered, clasping her hands with more fervent gratitude than his hurried words could speak. "Good-bye!"

Elizabeth held him back for an instant. "Oh, Mr. Bob, nothing try against the German army!" she entreated. "They are too strong. Now go, and God go with you."

The street was almost empty. Bob reached it unnoticed and crossed swiftly to the lane from which he had caught a glimpse of the German barracks a quarter of an hour before. He had observed that it ran through the length of the village obliquely parallel with the principal street. At a guess it should come out nearer by half a mile to the north end of the meadow than the way by which he had entered. He began walking down it swiftly, but fear urged him on until his feet would no longer keep the ground. He darted furtive looks around him and saw no passers-by. The scattered houses were closed, too, against the raw, misty air. He broke into a gentle run and reached the village outskirts in ten minutes. Where the lane ended the meadows began, and for a moment Bob paused, uncertain, looking about him at the brown fields and the trees with sombre, bare branches against the gloomy sky. The woods stretched beyond, and to these Bob raised his eyes

and saw a splotch of green among the winter bareness. It was the little wood of firs among which Benton lay hid. Bob sprang forward and crossing the first field at a leisurely walk, in case curious eyes were at any of the windows behind him, he descended a little knoll and then, stretching his long legs, broke into a run that would have won him trophies on any athletic field.

For a mile and a half he ran on, over fields and through thickets, steering wide from any signs of habitation, until his breath began to fail and his legs to ache and stumble. But on he went, until the woods closed in and, close at hand, he saw the little thatched shed whose safe haven meant more than anything in the world to him just then—refuge from certain death.

He darted in the narrow doorway and dropped, gasping, on the earthy floor. But only for a moment. The next he was tearing off the shabby, old garments he wore and searching in the dim corner for his precious discarded uniform. Five minutes later—never did he think he could have dressed so quickly—he stood up, once more an American officer.

Discovery he felt to be inevitable, for Karl must have been hot upon his trail when Elizabeth warned him—and he was barely half a mile from Benton's hiding-place. The search would be complete, but

by getting further off he would lessen the chance of giving away his comrade with him, and making him the victim of his own rashness. He went out, stepping cautiously, and seeing all clear, walked quickly into the woods toward the German line. He had got no further in his plan than this—to be taken far off to the right, beyond the grove of firs. But as he walked wearily on, he tried vainly to think of some way out, some place of concealment that German sagacity could not fathom. He thought vaguely, too, of home, and wished that he were back there. The words of an old song came into his mind:

"Do they miss me at home, do they miss me,
When the shadows darkly fall?"

He shook his head, trying hard to think to some purpose. The sound of the guns was nearer now, and the detonations distracted him as he tried to locate them. He thought he was within five miles of the German trenches. He listened intently, trying to find his direction, when crackle—crash! sounded the breaking twigs and brushwood back of him. He wheeled around and met the barrel of a German rifle with a stocky infantryman behind it.

Bob felt almost calm now that it had actually happened. He nodded to the soldier and, at a sharp signal, turned his back, raising his arms above his head. His pistol was jerked from his belt, his

pockets quickly searched, then the soldier gave an order, motioning him to go on. He led the way, and the two soon emerged from the wood and began skirting the meadow. Bob had a part to play in the eyes of this silent and stolid Teuton. He represented America, and she was going to be represented worthily, whatever despondency and dread might in reality clutch at the heart of her son. About half a mile down the field an officer was seated on a rock with a little group of soldiers about him. Bob guessed that this was the main base of the searching party Karl had instituted.

Karl was evidently taking part in the hunt, for he was not in sight, but as he drew nearer another figure brought Bob's heart into his mouth. Almost a groan escaped him. Benton was a prisoner like himself, and lost, with all his matchless skill, to the American flying corps.

Bob cast one remorseful look at him, which was returned by an undaunted nod and twinkle from the plucky Westerner, then the officer got up from the rock and strolled in Bob's direction. As he inspected the insignia on Bob's uniform he made a slight, stiff bow, which Bob returned. The German was a lieutenant like himself, a slender, fair man with keen, blue eyes and set lips.

"You are my prisoner, Lieutenant," he said in good English.

Bob made a sign of assent.

"You admit having come down by accident with Captain Benton this morning?"

"Yes," said Bob briefly.

"You were seen near the village and taken while walking in the woods. Did you expect to get away if nobody appeared to be in sight?"

"We hoped to get back across the lines after dark," said Bob, wishing he could talk to Benton.

"You will be taken into the town for examination directly. Have you any request to make?"

"No, thank you," said Bob. The officer turned away, and Bob was led by the guard to a place beside the rock, where he sidled along in the course of a few minutes until he could mumble a word near Benton's ear. The pilot spoke over his shoulder.

"Awfully sorry, Gordon, to have got you into this."

"Why, it's my fault," said Bob.

"No, it isn't. They saw us come down. They've been trying to locate our descent all day. They got me about an hour after you left, and before this search began. Don't know what started that."

The guard pushed in between the two, shutting off any further communication, and the little group formed in double lines, the prisoners in the center, for the march to the village.

Bob caught sight of Karl now, standing a short way off in excited conversation with a non-commissioned officer. He felt a sudden, unreasoning anger at sight of the familiar face and unfamiliar gray-uniformed figure of the man he had so long regarded as a harmless and friendly dependent. But recognizing the hard fortunes of war he turned his eyes resolutely away.

Karl, indeed, was quite willing to keep out of Bob's vicinity. Not all his pride and self-importance could make him look forward to such a meeting with any enjoyment. Just now he was fully taken up by the argument with his superior.

"You say when you saw him at the outskirts of the village he was dressed in peasant's clothes, Müller?" inquired the Feldwebel or Sergeant, dubiously. "The man is certainly in uniform now. The mist befogged your eyes. That muddy colored cloth they wear may look like anything at a distance." The Sergeant was milder than he might ordinarily have been at Karl's mistake because he belonged to the company Karl cooked for, and had enjoyed better meals lately than for a year past.

Karl hesitated, longing to insist, but not wishing to presume too far. He had won praise already for revealing the presence of another man after Benton was taken.

"We searched the village from end to end at your direction," the Sergeant continued. "He was not in it, naturally, as he was in these woods. That'll do, Müller. The squad is ready to move."

In an hour the two prisoners were in the house requisitioned in the village by the Regimental Commander. There they were separated. Bob was asked a few perfunctory questions by several officers in turn, relating to his rank, his corps, and his intention in making the morning's flight. He managed to reply with enough vagueness to give no information, and they stopped short of questions which he must refuse to answer. Before long they withdrew and left him alone. He stood forlornly by the window, watching the winter twilight close in and lights spring up through the village, when the door opened, and, to his delight, Benton came toward him.

"I have only a minute," he said quickly. "They told me I could say good-bye, but to cut it short."

"Good-bye?" echoed Bob, feeling his heavy heart sink still lower. "They aren't going to separate us, Benton?"

"Yes." Benton frowned, all the bitter and helpless disappointment at his capture distorting for an instant his calm face. "They are going to send me up to the Divisional Commander. Whether to present me with the Iron Cross or to show me

to a firing squad I haven't yet made out," he muttered. "But anyway you're to be sent on alone, with some French prisoners taken yesterday."

"Oh, Benton, that's tough," sighed Bob, his brave heart quailing for a moment at thought of the lonely captivity before him.

Benton brought back a feeble smile at sight of Bob's black depression. He held out a big hand. "Cheer up! Things might be worse, Bob. Here's hoping for the best."

Bob gave the friendly hand a warm clasp, and took a long, parting look into his comrade's frank, honest face. He thought of the memorable days of work they had spent so companionably together, but more than all, as he let go Benton's hand he seemed to sever the last link that bound him to freedom and America. Then Benton went out, and on his heels came a soldier, holding open the door for the fair-haired young officer, who said curtly:

"Follow me, Lieutenant. You will leave the village in half an hour."

CHAPTER X

A GUST OF WIND

WINTER came down very early this year on Governor's Island, before the close of November. Autumn did not linger pleasantly as usual, and Lucy's outdoor project, in which she was so sure she could interest Marian, had ended almost before it was begun. The two games of golf they had found time to play, before frost hardened the ground and the flags were taken in, did not awaken in Marian any great enthusiasm.

Lucy lamented to Julia one day that they had begun the experiment so late in the season.

"I ought to have tried to make her do outdoor things while it was warmer," she said regretfully. "Then she wouldn't have been willing to stop doing them. She hates cold weather and she isn't used to it. Her father has always taken her away somewhere for winter. Of course bowling is fun, but it isn't out-of-doors."

Lucy and Julia and Anne Matthews liked to get strenuous exercise in the bowling-alley at the Officers' Club, which they were allowed to use at

certain hours while the officers were on duty. They were trying to teach Marian the game, and her few shots had not been bad, but for the most part she liked better to watch the others play, and was quite ready to set up the pins every time rather than make the effort needed to roll the ball.

"Exercise isn't everything, though, Lucy," Julia objected. "We aren't trying to make a prize-fighter out of her. She's a lot stronger than she was, except for getting tired so easily. What I think she needs is company."

"That's what I think," agreed Lucy, warmly. "She ought to go with a crowd of girls who would persuade her into doing as they did. But you haven't any idea how hard it is to make her go out on these cold days, or take the trouble to go to see any one. I simply have to drag her out for the little walks we take, and you know how short they are. If I took her around the whole post I think we'd have to stop at the hospital. The other day I brought her in after a 'long walk'—at least she was pretty tired—and we had walked so slowly I had to run around and around the house to warm up, after she had gone in."

"She does poke along," said Julia laughing. "But, Lucy, somehow I can't help being interested in her, and wanting to get her well."

"That's just it," said Lucy quickly. "I'm so

glad you feel that way too. No matter how mad and provoked she makes me, I like her and I like being with her. Now that she talks and feels at home with us I'm never dull with her. She can tell no end about queer things and places she's seen, and whatever you talk about she's sure to understand."

"Anne Matthews likes her, I know," said Julia thoughtfully. "There's certainly nothing slow about Marian when it comes to learning lessons. If she waked up as much to other things we'd have a hard time keeping up with her."

Lucy was thinking over this conversation on a cold, sunny afternoon a week before Thanksgiving, when the three girls had gone out on the sea-wall for their walk, to look at the deep blue water, which had already begun to form into thin ice along the base of the rocks. Marian loved the changing waves, with which two voyages across the ocean had made her very familiar, and the easiest way to coax her out-of-doors after school on blustery days was to suggest a glimpse at the white-capped breakers, where the new land lately added to the island had led the sea-wall far out into the bay.

Marian was warmly dressed in a soft, fur-trimmed coat, with a blue, woolly cap pulled down over her ears. Her delicate cheeks were bright pink and her hair, tossed about by the keen wind, blew in gleaming curls across her face. She looked

filled with health and good spirits as she laughed and pushed her hair out of the way, her bright, untroubled eyes roaming over the foamy, blue water. Lucy looked at her with critical admiration, deciding on another effort to help along her cousin's growing willingness to take part in other girls' pleasures.

"I have an idea, Julia and Marian," she began, sure of Julia's support. "You know your mother, Julia, wants us to get as many girls as we can, to-morrow afternoon, to come to the Red Cross and finish up those clothes for the French orphans. What do you say to my inviting them all to our house afterward, to play games and have ice-cream? Margaret loves to make it and we wouldn't have cake—just cookies or something. It might help to get the girls together."

"It's a fine idea," said Julia, with a vigorous nod. "There are about a dozen girls, I think, if you ask all on the post from sixteen down to twelve. What do you think of it, Marian?"

"All right," agreed Marian, mildly interested.

"I'll make some oatmeal cookies for you, Lucy," offered Julia. "I love to make them."

"Will you? Thanks!" said Lucy, rubbing her red cheek with a wool-gloved hand. "Suppose we go back now, before Marian gets frozen stiff and can't be moved."

"I'm nearly that already," remarked Marian, stamping her feet. "We must have been out an hour by now, Lucy."

"Oh, yes, almost. The wind will be behind us going this way, so you won't mind it," Lucy called back, leading the single file along the sea-wall.

Once back from the exposed point of the island the wind died down, and as the girls left the sea-wall for the grass and neared the Infantry quarters on Brick Row, skirting the aviation field, Marian raised her chin from where it was snuggled down into her neck, and straightened her shoulders a little.

"Phew! What a cold place!" she breathed.

"Bob said in the letter we got yesterday," said Lucy, glancing toward the aviation sheds, "that it was cold there, too, though the weather had been good otherwise. He said the poor French people were awfully hard up for clothes. That's what made me wish to see if we can't get more things done for them."

"You don't know just where he is, do you, Lucy?" asked Julia.

"No, though Father thinks he can figure it out pretty well. He's not far from the base head-quarters of our army."

"He got our fruit-cake at last, anyhow," said

Marian with satisfaction. "I hate not knowing if things get there after you've sent them." She still shivered a little, though the brisk walk across the parade had now quite warmed the others.

"There goes the postman into your house with a big package, Lucy," said Julia as they crossed the grass from Colonel's to General's Row.

"Perhaps it's the present your father is going to send you for Thanksgiving, Marian," suggested Lucy.

"Maybe it is," agreed Marian, quickening her steps a little as they neared the house. "O-oh!" she breathed, once safely inside the Gordons' front door, "isn't it nice to be where it's warm!"

"Why, it's not so very cold," said Julia, laughing. "You are a regular pussy-cat, Marian."

"Except that she doesn't like cream—Mother tries to make her," remarked Lucy, examining the package the postman had left on the hall table. "It is for you, Marian. Here you are! Come on up-stairs, Julia, while we take off our things, and we will see what's inside. Can't we, Marian?"

"Of course," said Marian, pulling off her warm cap with one hand and picking up her box.

"I wonder where Mother is. I want to ask her about the party."

"Your mother went out with William, Miss Lucy," answered Margaret, who was passing

through the hall. "She said she wouldn't be gone long."

"All right, thanks," said Lucy, leading the way up to her room.

Seated on Lucy's bed Marian let her cousin untie all the knots in the string fastening her box, and only took a hand herself when it was time to raise the lid and lift out sheets of crinkly tissue-paper.

"It's a dress," cried Lucy, much more excited than the present's owner. "Oh, Marian, it's too lovely!"

Mr. Leslie, who never found enough to do for his lonely little daughter, had telegraphed to a New York shop for the prettiest dress they had, suitable to a fourteen-year-old girl. Marian's measurements were already on hand, and some clever person in the shop, where Marian was quite well known, had picked out the frock that met Lucy's admiring eyes. It was a soft rose taffeta silk, with black velvet ribbon girdle and wide organdy collar, the skirt puffed out into countless little ruffles that caught the light with a silvery sheen.

Even Marian was charmed. She lifted it out, smoothing the soft silk with her hand and wishing her father were near enough for her to thank him. "It *is* pretty, isn't it?" she asked, to which Lucy and Julia gave an enthusiastic assent.

"Please try it on right now. Won't you?"

begged Julia, beginning to unhook the dress Marian wore, without further delay.

"Oh—well," Marian agreed, holding up the new beauty and studying its fastenings.

"Now, slip this off and in you go," said Julia, twitching off Marian's school frock with one hand and putting the new dress over her head with the other.

The two girls hooked and snapped and patted and poked with eager hands for a minute, until Marian stood revealed in all the rose-frilled loveliness, a little untidy about her hair, which was a picturesque heap since she pulled off her cap, but otherwise all that could be desired. There was no doubt that the rose dress was tremendously becoming.

"Only those tan shoes spoil it," said artistic Julia, frowning at Marian's feet.

"Here's Mother!" said Lucy, springing up from the floor as steps sounded on the stairs. "Come in quick, Mother, and see Marian's present."

Mrs. Gordon came, and added her praise to the chorus. "What a perfectly lovely present, Marian. I do think you have the best father! That dress fits you perfectly, too. Turn around and let me see the back."

"Undo it, Cousin Sally, won't you? I'd like to sit down and take a rest," remarked Marian, tired

of being exhibited. "I'll wear it on Thanksgiving Day."

"I should think so," sighed Lucy. "That's something to be thankful for."

Marian cast a glance of more affection than she usually bestowed on her clothes at the little dress, as Mrs. Gordon laid it carefully back in the box.

"Mother, we have something else to talk about," said Lucy, as Mrs. Gordon took out her hat-pins and folded up her veil. "We want to get all the girls we can together, to-morrow afternoon, to work for Mrs. Houston, and afterward have them here to play games and give them ice-cream and cookies. How about it?"

"Why, yes, I think so," agreed Mrs. Gordon thoughtfully. "I don't see why you shouldn't. But the new maid I've engaged won't be here, so if you invite all the girls near your age you had better go down to Sergeant Wyatt's some time to-day and ask Rosie to come and help Margaret. There will be a good many to wait on."

"I'm going to bring some cookies, Mrs. Gordon," put in Julia. "I can make awfully good ones. The puppy found some of the last ones I made," she added regretfully.

"I know they're good, Julia, and that's very kind of you. You really needn't."

"Oh, I'd like to, Mrs. Gordon. I simply must

go now," Julia declared, getting hastily up from her seat on the floor.

"I'll come down with you," said Lucy, rising too. "I may as well go and speak to Rosie now," she added, at the foot of the stairs. "Just wait a second, Julia, till I get my coat."

Once outside Julia said good-night and started across the green, for Lucy's way led to the left.

"Good-bye till to-morrow. I'll telephone every one this evening," Lucy called after her.

Lucy found Rosie Wyatt willing enough to come and help. Rosie was a girl about Lucy's own age, the Sergeant's oldest daughter. She was always glad to earn a little money to help along her father's big family, and with Mrs. Gordon's instruction was becoming a very good little waitress.

When it came to telephoning the girls, Lucy managed to get fifteen, including herself and Marian, and she obtained each one's promise to go to the Red Cross next day to work from lunch time until half-past three.

The following afternoon saw a string of girls entering the club in twos and threes, armed with thimble and scissors, until quite a little crowd was assembled at one end of the Red Cross room.

"This was a splendid idea of yours, Lucy," said Mrs. Houston, looking with real satisfaction at the hands held out toward her for their share of sewing.

"These little dresses and wrappers are all stitched together, girls, just the way they are to go. I am sure you can all sew well enough to turn up the hems and put on the collars. If any one can't, she may sew on the buttons."

"Then I guess I'll have to sew on the buttons," said Marian, looking a little shamefacedly at the busy workers. "I certainly couldn't put on a collar that any orphan could wear."

"All right, Marian," said Mrs. Houston, smiling. "There are lots of buttons to go on, so you will have plenty to do. Only be sure to sew them tight enough. There won't be any one over there to put them on again."

"I just want to tell you, Mrs. Houston," said Hilda Lee, looking up, "that Anne Matthews and I were coming here to work this afternoon anyway, so we aren't such slackers as you may think."

"Oh, you girls are pretty good about coming, I think," said Mrs. Houston seriously. "I know it's more fun to stay outdoors after school than to sit over a table here. Part of Saturday is really the most we can expect of you in school-time."

"Especially if you work as hard as Marian and I do," put in Julia, laughing. Their marks for the month had come out unexpectedly a little higher than Anne's and Lucy's.

Marian looked pleased but said nothing. In fact

she was having rather a hard time with the buttons, and Lucy secretly took the work away from her more than once to straighten out a snarl of cotton.

"Just think of never having even sewed on a button for yourself," Lucy thought as she bent again over her own hemming. With the reflection she understood a little better a certain helplessness about Marian that cropped out at inconvenient moments, when Lucy in the midst of some occupation needed a helping hand. It was not that Marian was clumsy or lacked quickness—she learned anything with amazing readiness—it was only that she had never done little useful things and had to learn what most girls know.

The two hours of work passed pleasantly and quickly, with every one sewing as hard as she could and talking still harder. When the clock struck half-past three a pile of finished garments had been stacked upon the table.

"Oh, isn't this nice?" said Mrs. Houston, folding the little flannel dresses with approving hands. "You've done more than I ever thought you could, girls, and you've certainly earned a rest."

"We liked doing it," said Mabel Philips, putting down her last piece of work. "We'll come any time you want us, if we can."

Every one hurried into her hat and coat and ran down-stairs. Outdoors a cold wind was blowing

from Sandy Hook which flung capes and coats about in clinging folds, and made the sentry's ears red, as he walked in front of the club, shifting his gun occasionally from one shoulder to the other.

"Gracious!" said Marian, snuggling promptly down into her fur collar. "I'm glad Lucy can't take me for a walk to-day. This is the sort of weather she likes to go around the island just where the wind is strongest."

"Isn't she cruel?" said Anne Matthews, laughing. She did not add that Marian's rosier cheeks and growing endurance were a pretty good defense of Lucy's persevering methods.

Back at the Gordons', after the wraps were put aside, Lucy said to her guests: "I thought it would be fun to play games for a while. What do you think? You aren't any of you too old to like Blind Man's Buff and Stage-Coach and Winks, are you?"

The three reverend sixteen-year-olds expressed their perfect willingness to play anything, and proposed Stage-Coach to begin with. Every one was eager to move about after sitting still so long and in a few moments the house was in a joyous uproar, as though having worked so hard made the girls more able to enjoy themselves.

Stage-Coach was followed by Winks and Going to Jerusalem—played with the help of the Victrola, and finally a calm ensued for twenty questions.

Then came Charades, acted in Lucy's and Marian's rooms, with one room for the actors and one for the audience. These were so popular that they lasted until Lucy whispered to Marian, who happened to be on the audience side at the moment:

"Would you mind going down and telling Margaret and Rosie that we're ready now? It's nearly five o'clock."

Marian ran down-stairs to the dining-room and gave Rosie Lucy's message. Mrs. Gordon had put a pretty, embroidered cloth on the table and a big fern in the center. Everything was ready on it except for Margaret to bring things up from the kitchen, and for the candles to be lighted, for five o'clock meant nearly darkness now.

"Shall I light the candles?" asked Rosie, looking very trim and nice in her little white apron. "Did Miss Lucy say they'd be right down?"

"Yes, they are coming in just a minute," said Marian, drawing up another chair to the table, and counting to see if there were enough.

Suddenly a gust of wind from the harbor blew open the big glass door opening from the dining-room on the back piazza. Marian rushed toward it in a panic as the table-cloth billowed and fluttered and the pictures on the wall rocked back and forth. She seized the door and closed it, and as she struggled with the fastening she heard something fall

behind her and heard Rosie scream. The lighted candle had tipped over on the table and Rosie, wildly snatching at the fallen candlestick and at the second one, ready to fall, had set fire to her fluttering apron.

The flame sprang quickly to life in the air still quivering from the gust of wind, and curled dangerously against her muslin dress as Rosie's trembling hands tried vainly to untie the strings. "Get some water!" she stammered, white with terror, and remembering only one of the counsels taught her—to stand still.

The water-pitcher was across the room from Marian, and one good drenching would have put out the flame, but Marian stood rooted to the spot with horror, literally unable to move, her staring eyes fixed on Rosie's apron, and on the girl's terrified, white face as she still tugged at the strings behind her waist. But Rosie found her voice now, and she burst into such screams that Margaret came running breathless from below, and the whole party, abandoning charades, rushed down-stairs with headlong speed. One look at Rosie and Margaret seized the pitcher of water and poured it over her blazing apron and already kindling skirt; then, laying the child on the floor, she rolled her tightly in a rug till the last spark was extinguished. By the time the girls and Mrs. Gordon were on the

scene the danger was over, and except for being pale and trembling, Rosie was unharmed.

"What on earth happened? Is she hurt?" "Good gracious, did she catch fire?" "I heard those awful screams, and ——" came in a babel of voices. Some one dressed as a gypsy, to judge by a quantity of shawls and curtains, shouted excitedly to a sort of Daniel Boone, in Major Gordon's boots and William's leather cap. The charaders had not waited to change their clothes. The room was crowded to the doors, for the sentry had run into the house, gun in hand, at Rosie's shrieks, to be reenforced by two soldiers from the Quartermaster's who were doing carpentry in the basement.

Mrs. Gordon had little time to devote to Rosie, once assured that she was safe, for Marian, after that awful second of paralyzed horror, had sunk down almost fainting on a chair, oblivious to all around her. Lucy ran for water and patted her forehead with a moistened handkerchief, while the girls gathered about, alarmed and sympathetic, offering each one a different suggestion in excited whispers. Marian's failure to rise to the occasion of Rosie's need was kindly attributed to her being almost an invalid, and only exclamations of pity followed her, when at last she was able to be helped to her feet and up-stairs with Mrs. Gordon's arm about her shoulders.

Rosie was too shaken to stay, besides being dripping wet, so two of the guests volunteered to walk home with her, as Sergeant Wyatt's house was only a short way off.

"We won't be gone more than ten minutes, Lucy," they assured their hostess, who began to feel doubtful about her little party ever taking place.

Mrs. Gordon came back from Marian's room to urge every one to sit down at the table. "Marian is all right," she said, "and Margaret is waiting to bring things in. Sit down, all of you, and I will just see that Rosie has enough warm clothes on to go home."

Rosie was standing by the front door with Lucy and several of the girls still surrounding her, when down the stairs came Marian, looking pretty pale and holding on to the banister, but carrying under one arm a huge cardboard box. Lucy looked at her in astonishment and saw that her face was as quiet and determined as it had been on the day of Bob's departure. Marian went straight up to Rosie and held out the big box to her, saying, "Please take this, Rosie. It's a present, because I'm sorry your dress is spoiled. If I had had any sense it wouldn't have been."

In a hushed silence Rosie took hold of the box with uncertain fingers. But as she fumbled with

the lid and, opening it, half revealed the glories within, she flushed red with pleasure and sinking down on the floor lifted out the lovely rose-colored dress with a sigh of wondering delight. She was almost Marian's size, and no normal girl could have resisted that dress, especially one who had so few pretty things come her way as the Sergeant's little daughter.

"Oh, thank you!" she breathed, her eyes raised to Marian as to a fairy godsister as she put back the dress and struggled, in a fluttering shower of tissue-paper, to her feet.

The burst of enthusiasm which greeted this generous act was echoed with unbounded rejoicing in Lucy's heart. She could hardly wait until Rosie was gone and the others had started back toward the dining-room to catch her cousin by the arm and whisper, "Oh, Marian, you're a brick!"

All during the last half hour, since Marian had stood weakly helpless in the face of Rosie's danger, Lucy had been struggling with her feelings, vainly trying to excuse her cousin's cowardice and only succeeding in feeling unsympathetic and disappointed. But all in a moment now Lucy saw that Marian had been as little satisfied with her conduct as she herself, and had taken prompt and heroic measures to redeem it. No one who had seen Marian trying on that taffeta dress would have

doubted that it took a generous effort to give it away before she had even worn it. She might have given any one of a dozen dresses as good as new, and far better than Rosie's little muslin, but she chose the only one she really cared to keep.

Marian had flushed at Lucy's praise, and her face wore a happy smile as the guests sat down to a belated feast of hot chocolate, brown bread sandwiches, ice-cream and cookies. In a moment tongues were loosed, and the excitement made more to talk about now that it was safely over. Marian came in for a good share of comment, both aloud and whispered, and not one of Lucy's friends but gave her the credit she deserved for making the best atonement in her power.

When the girls had eaten all they could and finally taken their leave, Julia lingered a moment, ostensibly to ask Mrs. Gordon about the first-aid class which Mrs. Matthews was beginning the next day for Anne and her friends, but really more than anything to have a friendly word with Marian and let her know that an honest effort at self-improvement did not go unnoticed. Marian was quick enough at guessing the feelings of others. She felt the atmosphere of appreciation about her, and the faint color returned to her pale cheeks and a cheerful light to her eyes. She had suffered a few moments of real shame in her room alone after Mrs.

Gordon had left her, and nothing less than this would have restored her peace of mind.

That night Lucy sat on the sofa by her window with the moonlight shining in on her, and thought with a glow of satisfaction of her own hard work in Marian's behalf and of the returns it had already brought, small and scattered though they were. Her mother had not felt quite so pleased as the others at Marian's giving away her father's present, but she had nevertheless appreciated the sacrifice which lay behind it. Lucy felt a warm friendship for her cousin now, in spite of her trying moments, but another small problem loomed up, which must be solved on the next day.

"I'll ask Mother to decide it," she thought, for sleep was getting the best of her reflective mood.

Lucy raised the window and looked up at the full moon, gleaming clear and bright in the starry sky.

"That moon is looking down on Bob somewhere in France. I wonder if he's watching it too."

Then the cold air came blowing in and, with a last look at the man in the moon's cheerful face, she ran to get into bed.

CHAPTER XI

FIRST AID

NEXT morning Lucy began the day, as she often liked to do, by going into her mother's room for a talk before breakfast. Mrs. Gordon was standing in front of the dressing-table and Lucy sat down near her in her favorite position, her hands clasped about one knee.

"Well, what is it this morning, daughter?" asked Mrs. Gordon, smiling at Lucy's thoughtful face, and with an approving glance at her smoothly brushed hair and the fresh white collar on her serge dress. "What a pity you cannot stay as tidy as that all day," she added, for occasionally Lucy appeared after a busy hour with a wild look to her hair and clothes which disturbed her mother extremely.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Lucy, smiling back. "I am a little neater lately though, Mother, you said so yourself. But here's what I want to know. Our first-aid class begins to-day—you haven't forgotten it? And after Marian's almost fainting yesterday,

even though she did act so bully afterward, what do you think about her joining? I'm going to be worried half the time about her."

Mrs. Gordon turned from the dressing-table to look at Lucy as she answered, "I want her to join. Never mind whether you feel nervous about it or not. You know I told you it was not going to be an easy task to make Marian so well and strong as you are, but you have succeeded far better than I hoped. I shall be very much disappointed if Marian doesn't take part in that class. There is everything in it she needs—companionship, work, competition—and you know how quick she is to learn. I don't feel at all afraid that it will be too hard for her. She is able to do a lot if she is interested."

"Yes," nodded Lucy, "I knew you'd say that, Mother, so I didn't bother deciding it for myself."

"She wants to join, doesn't she?"

"Yes, rather. I can make her like it, once we get started."

"Of course, it would be easier, Lucy, to let Marian alone, to do things or not as she happens to like," Mrs. Gordon went on, "but that wouldn't be doing her any service, or Cousin Henry either. He wasn't satisfied to see Marian a frail, listless little shadow of a girl. It has made him thin and anxious himself in the years since her mother died, but I

think he hated forcing her to do anything she did not want to."

"I think he did, too," said Lucy, looking up with a responsive nod. "It's a lot of help to talk things over with you, Mother. I do get muddled sometimes. I don't see what any girl does without a mother to go to, even if her father is as kind as Cousin Henry."

"What's this?" asked Major Gordon's voice from the door. "Something hard about a father? This one would like his breakfast in about two minutes, if the conversation is over."

Marian's consent to join the first aid and home nursing class had only got as far as saying she would try it once, but that was all Lucy wanted for the present. The class was to meet at the Matthews' the first time and then at the house of each member in turn every Saturday morning. Mrs. Matthews had engaged a nurse from the New York Hospital to give the course, after the repeated begging of Anne and the other girls for her to follow up the suggestion she had made a month before. Some of Lucy's guests of the previous day were too young to take the course, but the class numbered eight members, ranging in age from fourteen to sixteen.

When Lucy and Marian reached the Matthews' at nine o'clock, most of them were already there, seated in the small room to the left of the hall, with

Miss Thomas ready to address them. She was a slim, athletic looking young woman with curly red hair and a bright twinkle in her eyes. When her whole class was before her she began to speak without preamble.

"Instead of giving you the whole course in first aid and then the home nursing, I am going to devote half of the morning to each," she said, laying down a little pile of books on the table before her.

"I warn you, girls, there is a little studying to be done in connection with this course, but it isn't very tedious, and I know you are here to do things in earnest. The first half of the morning while you are all fresh and feel restless we will have our nursing, and then I think you will be more ready to sit still for my talk on first aid. So if you will show me to a bedroom, Miss Matthews, we will begin at once."

Anne led the way up-stairs to her own room, where Miss Thomas, with an energetic quickness that won Lucy's instant approval, began pulling the neatly made bed to pieces.

"Now, let's see you make that up comfortably for an invalid," she directed, nodding to Julia. "You, Miss Matthews, prepare a bedside table, with water, spoon, medicine glass, thermometer, and whatever will be wanted for the doctor's visit.

This is, of course, just experimenting to see how much you all know of the elements of nursing. Now, I want a patient. You, please," she decided, pointing after a swift glance around at Marian, who shrank back quite visibly at the command.

" Oh, you mustn't mind anything," Miss Thomas reproached her, with a pleasant, reassuring smile. " I expect every girl to be ready and eager to do her part. Sit down on that chair, please, Miss—Leslie, while this young lady here takes your pulse. You," she nodded in Lucy's direction, " please bring the thermometer and take her temperature. We want to find out all we can about her condition before the doctor comes, and if she has any fever she must wait for his arrival in bed."

Marian sat down, looking rather doubtful about the whole proceeding, though Lucy whispered in her ear as she stuck the thermometer under her tongue, " Don't mind—we'll all have to do it." Playing invalid was not yet much of a joke to Marian, whose ill-health had been until lately the most important thing in life, and, for a moment, her thoughts returned to the old, trying days of her illness as she held the thermometer in her mouth while Hilda Lee felt her pulse with great intentness, her eyes glued on the second hand of Miss Thomas' watch and her lips rapidly moving.

" Good gracious," she exclaimed suddenly, letting

fall Marian's hand and rising excitedly to her feet, "Miss Thomas, her pulse is a hundred and ten!"

"Really?" asked Miss Thomas, smiling quite serenely. "What is her temperature, Miss Gordon?"

Lucy was at the window, trying to find the elusive red streak on the thermometer, and now she declared with an air of relief after Hilda's announcement, "It's normal. Just at the little arrow."

"But what's the matter with her pulse, Miss Thomas?" Hilda insisted. "It should be around eighty, shouldn't it?"

Marian was looking alarmed herself, and still sat anxiously on her chair, as though her strength might fail her. Miss Thomas laughed and went over to her side.

"It's nothing but a little excitement, because she knew her pulse was being taken," she explained. "You're quite all right, Miss Leslie, and you did very well. Now, Miss Houston, suppose we say that you are a patient who has been ill several weeks. Just slip off your pumps and lie down on the bed. Let's see if Miss Gordon can raise you comfortably to give you a drink and help you to turn over. Act very helpless and do nothing for yourself."

Julia obeyed and Lucy, putting a strong arm behind her shoulders, raised her vigorously to a sitting position.

"Oh, you are a little too energetic," said Miss Thomas. "That would hurt any sore muscles outrageously. Try again. Raise her firmly but more slowly."

This time Lucy lifted Julia as tenderly as a basket of eggs, and breathed a sigh of relief when it was done, for Julia made herself as heavy as possible, and looked the most helpless invalid out of a hospital.

"You try it now," said Miss Thomas, nodding to Mabel Philips, "and this time arrange her pillows with your other hand before letting her lie back."

Marian was standing by the bedside, her uneasiness about herself forgotten as she watched Julia, and Miss Thomas reached out a steady hand and felt her pulse.

"It's all right now," she nodded to Marian with a smile. "Not more than eighty-two. You mustn't let it fool you that way. It's possible to become quite ill if we think we are. When you're in doubt as to how you feel, decide right away that you are quite well, and more than likely you will be."

"What, can you really feel ill because you think you're going to?" asked Marian incredulously.

"Some people can, especially those who have had trying illnesses. The best thing for every one in

the world is to obey the laws of health and then think no more about feelings."

"Yes, you can often help yourself to get better by just not giving in," remarked Mabel.

"Not when you have a toothache. You can't forget that," said Anne thoughtfully, at which every one laughed. One toothache was the only sickness Anne had ever suffered from since her whooping-cough days.

The whole class was listening to Miss Thomas, who spoke so particularly to Marian, because her keen eyes had seen and understood much of the little invalid's life history in the short while that she had watched Marian's pretty, sensitive face, where the delicate color came and went with such quick changes at the least disturbance.

"We haven't accomplished very much this morning," she said at last, turning back to the others, "because I was only trying to see where we were and how I had better start. We will go through the regular nurse's program next week. Now, if you will come down-stairs, I will give you a little talk and assign you lessons in the first-aid manual."

"Go on, you husky invalid," said Lucy to Julia, giving her former patient a jog in the back as they filed out of the room. "You nearly broke my arm."

"Well, you always say you like hard things to

do," responded Julia laughing, "so I thought I'd give you the chance. I like being the sick person," she added. "I hope she chooses me again."

"I know something about bandaging, when we come to that," said Lucy. "Elizabeth taught me. You sit with me, Julia. Marian is with Anne, so she is all right."

Lucy glanced along the row of girls and saw with pleasure that Marian showed a great deal of interest in the talk which followed. When the lesson had been given out at the end and the girls rose to go, Marian took her book from Miss Thomas with a friendly smile such as she seldom accorded to strangers. The three girls walked home together as far as the Gordons' and Julia said, as they discussed the morning's work:

"Isn't she a nice, jolly person? I don't mind doing anything she asks me to do."

"Yes, isn't she nice?" agreed Marian. "She'd make you feel better as soon as she came in the room to nurse you. I think I'll like it as soon as I get it through my head a little," she added, doubtfully. "I don't know even as much about it as the rest of you."

"You must know precious little," said Julia. "I can hardly wait to see what the lesson is. I bet it's hard, from what she said." They had neared the Gordons' house and Julia turned to cross the grass.

"I'm too hungry to go any further with you. Good-bye, till this afternoon!"

At lunch Lucy and Marian gave an interested account of the morning's doings, and Marian eagerly described the extraordinary conduct of her pulse and Miss Thomas' words, which she had taken very thoughtfully. Mrs. Gordon listened with a little of her attention diverted to the new housemaid who had arrived only the night before and seemed not very certain where to find the plates and spoons as they were wanted. But she felt a very real satisfaction that Marian had liked the class and was anxious to continue it, and she watched her comfortably eating chicken hash and rice with the feeling that health and the pleasures belonging to it were nearer to the motherless girl than they had ever been before.

"We're going to have a snow-storm before night, children," remarked Major Gordon, as they rose from the table, "so don't wander far out on the prairies this afternoon." The Major had spent much of his home service in the West, and the restricted limits of this island post were always a subject of mild amusement to him.

"I have to wander over my Latin lesson before I do anything else," said Lucy, resignedly. "Let's go up-stairs and get it done, Marian. I keep my school papers safely out of reach since Happy

chewed up my French composition. Yes, he did, William, so you needn't look offended."

"But he's only chewed your things once, Lucy. Most of the things he's eaten were mine," protested William, putting up a defense which made everybody laugh.

"All right. I didn't mind much," said Lucy. "I like him just the same."

When Marian and Lucy had left the room, Major Gordon came back from the hall, cap in hand, to say to his wife, "Sally, have you noticed a change in Marian lately—how much livelier she seems?"

Mrs. Gordon laughed. "Have I noticed it, James! Lucy and I have been doing our best to bring it about for the past two months. She actually enjoys going around with other girls now, and the effort has been a good thing for Lucy, too. You know, Marian has the making of a very fine and accomplished girl under her drawback of ill-health. Don't you think she has grown to be a very pleasant little guest?"

"Not only that, but she looks so much stronger, and she has some color in her cheeks. I hated to see her as thin and white as she looked in the summer. I didn't wonder Henry was afraid to leave her. She's gained at least ten pounds, I'm certain—though she hasn't had many luxuries here."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Gordon thoughtfully.

"It's luxury to have a home and friends her own age, after having lived principally in hotels and on shipboard for so long. I don't think she has known what home is since her mother died. When she gets back her health—you remember what a bright, jolly little thing she was years ago, James?—I know Marian will want to open up that big Long Island house and live there. She is the only one left to make a home for her father, and with a little more self-confidence she is quite smart enough to do it."

"Aren't you rushing things a little?" inquired Major Gordon genially. "Henry would be a bit surprised at the idea."

"I hope he will be more surprised when he sees her," said Mrs. Gordon, smiling. "Don't stay too long at Headquarters," she added, as her husband moved toward the door. "It's Saturday, you know."

The Major jerked his head in the direction of the parade, where squads of recruits were tirelessly drilling in the cold wind. "It's also war time," he remarked, stopping to tickle Happy's ears as he came racing up the steps.

Lucy and Marian had gone up-stairs and plunged into their Latin, so as to finish with it as soon as possible. It was not a popular study with either of them, and translation, of which Miss Ellis seemed especially fond, was Lucy's bugbear.

"How far have you gone, Marian?" she asked after twenty minutes' silence. "'The queen will fight?' I don't believe she will, anyway—why should she? Aren't these the silliest sentences?"

"She has to fight because we know so few verbs," said Marian, laying down her pen to stretch, "unless you want to make her dance or sing."

Lucy sighed and went on to the next line: "'The slaves were wounded with spears and arrows.' I guess it wasn't a pacifist who wrote this book."

"Letter, please," said a timid voice at the door, and the new maid handed an envelope to Marian, whose "Thank you" sounded so pleased that Lucy decided the letter was from her father.

Lucy's eyes left her book again to follow the little maid out of the room with a friendly interest. She was a Belgian girl, whom Mrs. Gordon had engaged in New York, where she had just landed from England. She had spent the last two years in London and learned there to speak English pretty well, but before leaving her own country she had undergone danger and privations which still lingered vividly in her memory. Margaret had already confided to Lucy that she had spent most of the evening before in listening to Marie's story. "It's enough to give you bad dreams to hear her,

"LETTER, PLEASE", SAID A TIMID VOICE

Miss Lucy," she said feelingly. "Sorry as I am for the poor girl."

No trace of Marie's memory of the war showed in her face, but a certain quiet gentleness in her manner made her seem older than her years. She was a quick, neat-handed little thing who could sweep and dust to Mrs. Gordon's liking, and had already won William's respect by the number of games she knew how to play, most of them involving as much running and skipping as he liked. Lucy was forgetting her Latin to wonder how it would feel to be driven brutally from her own country, leaving it invaded and ruined, and if she could have faced it with little Marie's quiet courage. A sudden joyful exclamation from Marian interrupted her.

"Lucy, what do you think? Father is going to Montreal, and will come here right afterward. He leaves for Canada next week, so he will probably be home before the first of January. A month isn't so awfully long, is it? And it may be less." Marian was sincerely devoted to her father, and the joy in her face was pleasant to see.

"Oh, I'm so glad, Marian," cried Lucy warmly, "but I don't want you to go away a bit—will you have to?"

"I don't know. Father says he may have to go back West. I don't want to leave here, either, Lucy.

It's just that I will be so glad to see him again." She turned back eagerly to the letter. "I must see what else he says."

Mr. Leslie had written of the overwhelming rush of work in the lumber camps and of the necessity for his making a trip to Canada to unite his interests with those of some owners of Canadian forest land. The British Commission had brought valuable suggestions to the Government ship-building scheme, and he wished to make his supplies useful to the utmost possible extent.

Marian's father had a world-wide experience in other beside business ventures. His frank and attractive personality had won him friends in many countries and, with a keen mind and a large fortune at his command, he had grown to be a man of wide influence in public life. Marian knew that her father had friends among the Allied Commissions and was not surprised at his accompanying the Britishers into Canada. He was never willing to do his work except most thoroughly, and no distance was too great for him to travel if his purpose could better be served by going.

"I must show this to Cousin Sally," said Marian, when she had finished the letter. "Just one more sentence and I'll be done." She went back to her Latin, and in another few moments put down her pen and gathered up her papers. "How nearly

through are you, Lucy? I'll go down and find Cousin Sally."

"Just a minute," murmured Lucy, searching for an elusive verb. "Oh, I see it now. Take your things down with you, Marian. We're going out, aren't we?"

"All right," called Marian from her room. "I'll bet it's cold," she added with sudden foreboding.

Left alone, Lucy scrambled through the last of her lesson and slammed the book shut with relief. "No more of that till Monday," she thought, pushing the book out of sight under a sofa pillow and going to the closet for her coat and tam-o'-shanter. Remembering her mother's early morning remarks, she stopped in front of the glass to put on her tam, and pushed some stray locks of hair up under it instead of pulling it on her head as she went out of the room. She left the closet door open and the ink-bottle uncorked, but then she was preoccupied in thinking of Mr. Leslie's return and hoping he would be delayed for another month, until Marian's growing activity had brought her still nearer to health.

Down-stairs she found her mother rejoicing with Marian over the good news and reading the letter aloud.

"Oh, I wish he could get here for Christmas, Cousin Sally," Marian exclaimed, when Mrs. Gor-

don had finished. "He is always so nice about giving things that I've never even asked for." Christmas this year seemed far more interesting than it had ever been before Marian had cousins to share it with, and the presents she had accepted heretofore with listless thanks and little appreciation held great possibilities for pleasure this year, if the Gordons could enjoy them too.

Christmas for Lucy and her mother did not seem very merry, and Marian's words wakened more sad thoughts than bright ones for the moment in their hearts. It would be the first Christmas in Lucy's lifetime that Bob had not been home. Even in his plebe year at West Point he had worked hard enough to get two days off and had come home in a blinding snow-storm. It seemed dreadful to Lucy to celebrate gayly without him, and only her mother's reminder that William ought not to be so disappointed had made her look forward to Christmas with any real interest. The part she had most enjoyed was getting a big box sent to Bob a week ago, with every good thing in it that she could remember he liked, or that bore any reasonable chance of reaching there in eatable condition. She had made five pounds of fudge, standing over the stove until Margaret exclaimed in alarm at her hot, flushed cheeks, and came to take the spoon out of her hand. But the fudge was good, and so was

everything else that went in the box, and if only Lucy could have taken it over to France herself and handed it safely to Bob she would have been satisfied.

She was on the point of saying now, "I wonder if Bob will get that box all right," but she checked herself abruptly and said, instead, "Come on, Marian, if we wait any longer it will be cold and horrid outdoors. Let's go now."

"I wouldn't go far; it really looks like snow," remarked Mrs. Gordon, drawing aside the curtain.

"We won't, Mother. Perhaps we'll only go as far as Julia's," said Lucy, winding a muffler about her neck.

Marian was already wrapped in cloth and fur, and the two girls went outdoors and crossed the grass toward the Houstons', where the rising wind whipped at their clothes and almost lifted Marian off her feet, while she shrieked and clung to Lucy, alternating between fear and laughter.

"I guess we won't go out on the sea-wall to-day," said Lucy; "unless you especially wish to?" she added with a funny look.

"Br-r-r!" said Marian, shivering at the thought. "Why doesn't every one live in the South, I wonder? What's the use in having cold ears and a frozen face, and being nearly blown off your feet? I'm sorry for that sentry."

"Why, this isn't really winter yet—it's only cold for November," said Lucy, encouragingly. "Oh, Governor's Island is a nice, sheltered spot in mid-winter. It's not so cold as Fort Russell. There it's nearly always below zero. The only warm post we've ever been was at Fort McPherson, Georgia, and I was so little then I didn't appreciate it. Let's go right in. I can't wait while they answer the bell," she declared on the Houstons' door-step. "Julia won't mind."

Once the three girls were sitting comfortably in Julia's room nothing could tempt Marian outdoors again for a walk, and there they stayed until it grew dark and Lucy reminded her that the only way to get home was the way they had come. Julia loved cold weather, and was always amused at Marian's aversion to it.

"Somehow it makes me feel lively and jolly. I can do twice as much now as when it's hot," she said to Marian, as she helped her on with her coat.

"Well, I hate it, and the most you can expect of me is to go out in it. You can't expect me to like it, for I just don't and won't," said Marian decidedly. "Thanks, Julia, I can do the rest myself," she added, smiling at her own earnestness, for she was learning from Lucy the great art of laughing at herself.

"Well, I hope you make the long, perilous jour-

ney safely," said Julia, taking her guests down to the door and looking across the grass at the lights of the Gordons' house. "I seem to see a light in the distance, so have courage."

"Good-night," said Lucy, laughing as she closed the door.

They were blown most of the way home, so it was not much effort to walk, as Marian remarked from the depths of her fur collar. The snow that Major Gordon had predicted was falling in scattered flakes, but the wind had risen to a gale and blew with piercing cold on their faces.

It was a hard night for the sentries on duty along the sea-wall on the windward side of the post, where the blast beat with full force upon them and the waves lashed the rocks below. Captain Evans came in to the Gordons' after dinner. He was officer of the guard and had just made his nine o'clock tour of inspection, the last until one in the morning. He told of his wind-blown walk about the island, after which he had ordered the sentries frequently relieved during the night.

Lucy usually rather liked these wild autumn and winter storms, and had enjoyed going to sleep with the windows rattling and the wind whistling around the house, but at bedtime she said soberly to her mother, when Mrs. Gordon came into her room to say good-night:

"I hope Bob has a stove or something. I know they probably aren't having a storm over there, but I hate to get into nice, warm covers and not be sure he has enough."

Her words, and the anxious affection prompting them, were the echo of her mother's inmost thoughts, but Mrs. Gordon could not say anything just then in answer. She only tucked her daughter carefully in bed, and kissed her good-night.

CHAPTER XII

LOCKED DOORS

A NIGHT and a day spent in a bare freight car, with cold wind blowing through the cracks, is uncomfortable traveling, but Bob and his companions would have thought little of that had circumstances been different. It was the knowledge of where they were going—as much as they guessed of it—that made the cold and the monotonous jogging along the rails almost unbearable.

Bob could have had the adjoining empty car all to himself, in consideration of his rank, instead of sharing this one with a dozen French soldiers and non-commissioned officers. But he had not the least desire for his own company just then, and the friendly faces of the captured poilus were the only bright spot in the dreary darkness of his prison. At the other end of the car were four German soldiers and a sergeant. Only one of these at a time paid any especial attention to the prisoners, and he merely sat stolidly on guard beside his rifle. The sliding doors were closed and bolted, and there was no possible chance of escape.

All night Bob had lain on the hard, jolting floor

trying to sleep, hoping for dreams of something else beside the bitter reality. Sleep would not come, so he tried to lie still and think of nothing but the jogging wheels and the creaking timbers, until a light, gleaming through the cracks from outside, or a sigh from one of his fellow prisoners brought him wide awake again with a sharp pang of misery.

His thoughts would not keep long away from the dismal future, and look ahead as he might with desperate search, he could see nothing to bring any comfort. All his hopes and eager ambition to give good service to America in the coming struggle had in one wretched day been shattered. He was disarmed, captured and helpless in German hands, and nothing that he had heard or read in the past three years gave a reassuring sound to the words, or could make his fate other than a hard one, without prospect of change or betterment. How long would the war last? No one could have told him that, and it was the only knowledge that held any hope of freedom or happiness.

As the long hours wore by, Bob went over in his restless mind all the past year and what it had brought him. In the ordinary course of events he would have been a first classman now, taking part in the routine of West Point life, and looking forward to Christmas leave. When the German army had crossed the Belgian border during his plebe sum-

mer, in all the excited discussion of it at West Point he had never dreamed that the fourth year of the war would find him inside a German prison.

At last the cold and discomfort of his position dulled his thoughts, and changed them to a weary longing for warmth and food. At dawn the slow train jerked itself to a standstill and the guard pushed open one of the wide doors. A faint light came in from the leaden morning sky, and showed a town half a mile beyond the tracks, and a small wooden signal-house or watering station close at hand. The guard brought bread and water from the house and distributed it among the prisoners, in rather meagre quantities, but it was eagerly welcomed by the tired, hungry men. The soldier who gave Bob his portion offered him water from a tin cup instead of from the pail given to the others. Almost at once the door was closed again and the train went on. The guard retired to their end of the car to munch their bread, but one of them said something to the prisoners in German as he passed, accompanied by a warning shake of the head. Nobody understood him, and a general inquiry arose among them as to what he meant, giving a spark of interest for the moment to the dreary journey. Bob thought he guessed the man's meaning and, summoning his French, said to the little group near him:

"I think he means we must keep some of this bread for dinner."

A dozen faces were turned in his direction, and nearly as many voices answered, "*Merci, mon officier,*" with smiles of acknowledgment.

Bob's notice and help seemed to be received by these forlorn and dispirited Frenchmen with the liveliest pleasure, and evidently they were glad enough of a superior to question, for after a few moments of whispered conversation, one of them approached Bob and, squatting down beside him, said respectfully:

"May I make an inquiry, *mon officier?*"

Bob nodded, looking into the man's tired face and at the dirty bandage wound about his throat.

"Can you tell us where we are going?" asked the soldier doubtfully. "Is it to Germany?"

"I don't know which part, but it is certainly Germany," Bob responded. "After these long hours we must be well inside the German border. I suppose we shall be taken to the nearest prison camp."

The soldier gave a nod of agreement, rising to rejoin his comrades with a murmur of thanks, but Bob held him back. "What is the matter there?" he asked, pointing to the man's throat.

"Only a slight wound. It is not very painful," said the Frenchman, smiling and touching the bandage cautiously as he spoke.

"Are any of the others wounded?" inquired Bob, getting up from the floor.

"Yes, *mon Lieutenant,* several of us have small wounds. That fellow with the empty sleeve has his arm in a sling, and one other had a bullet through his leg. They received first dressing at Petit-Bois after we were taken."

"We may be on this train all day," said Bob, speaking careful French to make his meaning clear. "Let me look at the wounds, and perhaps I can make you more comfortable."

No one made any objection when this was explained. The man with the empty sleeve was pale and suffering from the exposure of his wounded arm to the cold, but he offered himself to Bob's unskilled ministrations without a murmur.

Before unwrapping the bandages Bob walked over to where the German guard sat or leaned against the side of the car. At his approach the sergeant on duty stood up with visible reluctance.

"Have you any dressings—bandages—I could use for the wounded prisoners?" asked Bob, speaking as distinctly as he could.

The man shook his head uncomprehendingly. Then, as Bob struggled to recall the little German he had picked up from Karl and Elizabeth, the sergeant spoke to a soldier who was sitting on the

floor near by and motioned to him. The soldier got up and, approaching Bob, said to him:

"Speak English. I can understand you, Herr Lieutenant."

Bob repeated his request. The man shook his head, looking toward the Frenchmen with little interest in his face. "We have nothing," he said at last.

"What time shall we reach our destination?" Bob inquired. "How soon do we stop?" he altered the question, as the man looked blankly at him.

"Ach, to-night, I think."

Bob nodded and went back to his fellow prisoners. He did the best he could for the wounded men, with the help of a little water, his handkerchief, and some strips torn from his shirt. The first-aid packets carried by the French soldiers had been used for their dressings at Petit-Bois, and Bob's had been retained by his German captor there, as had everything else in his possession except his money, which was carefully hidden in his coat lining.

After an hour's hard work, not unaccompanied by a good deal of pain on the part of the willing patients, he felt that he had done what he could toward improving their condition. With the realization of how little considerate treatment was to be

expected by prisoners in German hands, he thanked his stars that he was at least whole and unwounded, with strength to face the worst.

When he had finished his task he sat down again by the car wall and went off into another dismal revery, broken only by pangs of hunger which brought to mind with tantalizing vividness the hearty satisfying food he had enjoyed such a short time before. He thought of Benton, too, and wondered what had become of him, and whether the Germans' respect for his prowess would bring him better or worse treatment at their hands. One thing he was sure of, they would do their utmost to extract from him some of the priceless information he had gathered in the past six months. Equally certain it was that they would learn nothing.

It was Sunday, Bob suddenly remembered. At home, on Governor's Island, his people would about now be starting peacefully to St. Cornelius' Chapel for the morning service. Their thoughts and prayers would be with him, he knew, but they would think of him as in the squadron's camp in the midst of friends and allies. He began calculating how long it would take for news of his disappearance to reach home. Taking into account the inquiries made along a portion of the French and British fronts to ascertain if he and Benton had come down anywhere behind their own lines, he thought it

might be several days before word was ordered cabled to America. As long again, perhaps, before the cable reached there. He rather hoped for a delay. What good would it do them to know that he was lost? They would think the worst, though it was hard to realize just then that there was a worse fate which could have befallen him.

"Perhaps I can get word home that I am alive and a prisoner," he encouraged himself, though with no great confidence in any means of communication which might come his way. "It will spoil their Christmas, whichever they hear," he thought, with a sudden boyish longing at the word for a sight of home, made ready for Christmas, trimmed with holly, the big fir tree in the dining-room and each one of the family planning to add something to the day's celebration. The Gordons always managed to have a good time at Christmas, and their house was usually full of visitors on Christmas Day. Last year there had been a heavy snow-storm, and Bob had taken William out on his new sled until William's cheeks were so red and white Elizabeth thought they were frost-bitten and would not let him go near the fire when they came in. Cold seemed jolly and different when there was a warm house to go back to. Bob shivered at this thought, and shifted his back from a wide chink in the boards, but Elizabeth's name brought with it a

rush of gratitude as he remembered his hour of deadly peril at Karl's hands.

At about dusk that evening the train stopped and the guards flung open the doors. They were in the yard of a large railway station, and on the tracks beside the car appeared a couple of officials and half a dozen soldiers with fixed bayonets. A little more bread was distributed among the prisoners, after which they were ordered to get out and form in double file, Bob to bring up the rear. Any movement was welcome to the men's cramped and chilled limbs, and even the weakest got up and willingly clambered down to the ground. The officials exchanged a few words with the sergeant in charge of the prisoners, who then gave the order to march. The escort of soldiers from the station fell in with the others in a double line about the prisoners and the party marched briskly out of the yard and through the station, where a scant number of travelers looked curiously after them, and on into the dimly lighted streets of the town.

Bob could not distinguish much through the dusk, except that the place appeared to be fairly large, with cobbled streets and crowds of people, all hurrying homeward at this hour, talking rapid German and exclaiming at sight of the prisoners as they passed, though Bob thought they must be a fairly familiar sight by this time. American

prisoners would be a novelty, but they could not know him to be one. He looked longingly at the shop windows in search of something more to eat, but he saw nothing, and could not have stopped to buy it if he had.

In a few minutes they turned off into a side street, which soon became a road leading into the open country. Half an hour's quick march through the thickening darkness brought into sight a group of one-storied, barrack-like buildings from which scattered lights glimmered. The prisoners were led through a wooden gateway, along passages made by enclosing the space with wire fencing, and finally to one of the low buildings, where the sentry on guard at that point threw open a door at a word from the sergeant in command.

They entered a good-sized room, which was lighted by a lamp, and looked like a guard or orderly room. There was no furniture in it but a table and two chairs. From here the French soldiers were marched off immediately to their quarters, while Bob, after a moment's delay while the sergeant went out and evidently consulted some one, was once more led outdoors and along the barrack front to another angle of the building. The room to which the sergeant now admitted him was small and bare, so far as Bob could see in the darkness. It was also very cold, and the wind whistled against

the pane of the one window in the opposite wall. At the right was a mud and brick chimney, as he saw by the light of a lamp which a soldier now brought in and stood upon a rough little table near the center of the room. There was a cot bed, too, he discovered, with a gray blanket thrown over it, and by the table a three-legged stool. The soldier threw down an armful of wood he carried and began building a small fire, to Bob's enormous relief. The sergeant had already gone out, closing the door after him. He evidently felt no further responsibility, now that his prisoner's safe arrival was assured, as Bob could well understand, recalling the number of armed and watchful sentries he had passed in the outskirts of the prison camp.

He sat down on the stool and watched the soldier dully, as he laid the sticks, blew the flame into life with puffs of breath that turned to vapor in the chilly air, and finally rose from the earthen floor, leaving the other sticks beside the hearth. He put a swift question to Bob, glancing doubtfully toward the fire. Bob had not the least idea what he said, but he nodded and the man went out, locking the door with a brisk rattle of keys.

Bob went to the fire and crouched in front of it, warming his cold hands. Then with a sudden thought he rose and pulled the cot over in front of the hearth. The two gray blankets looked flimsy

enough and were the only bedding above the canvas strips that made the mattress. Taking stock of his fuel he carefully banked up the burning sticks, adding one more to the fire. Then, after a look at the little nailed-down window, whose chinks, he decided, with the gusty draft down the chimney would give him air enough to breathe, he put out the lamp, pulled off his boots, and lay down on his cot before the meagre fire.

For a second he watched the flame before his eyes closed. He had thought so much in the last twenty-four hours, in every mood from revery to ungovernable despair, that it seemed to him he would go crazy if his mind worked any longer. With a desperate desire for rest in all his aching and weary limbs, he cast his cares on Heaven, and wrapping the thin blankets closely about him quickly fell asleep.

When he awoke it was daylight, and outside and around him sounded heavy footsteps and now and then voices shouting orders. Bob sat up, feeling wonderfully refreshed by his sleep, though his mind was clear enough about the happenings of the night before and he frowned, weighed down with a black depression. His fire was almost out and the room was freezing. He got up and rekindled the blaze with what was left of the wood, then walked around the little room trying to warm himself. By his wrist-watch it was a quarter to seven, and the sun

had not yet risen. Through the window he could see only wire netting with a pacing sentry behind it, and beyond that a field and a piece of woodland. He had not the remotest idea what part of Germany he was in. The north, he imagined by the increased cold, but he was not familiar enough with the climate to make a good guess.

He felt ravenously hungry, and as he walked aimlessly about the little space he tried to guess by the sounds what was happening around him, and what chance he had of getting some sort of breakfast before long. The chimney side of the room, to judge by the noise beyond it, adjoined a guard room or some occupied part of the barracks, but from the left side came no sounds except an occasional light footstep, and once the rasping of a chair or table over the clay floor. Bob wondered who his quiet neighbors were on this side, his thoughts going also to the wounded men among his late companions, and hoping that his bungling work had been supplemented before this by proper dressings.

Presently he heard steps outside on the gravel and in a moment his door was unlocked and opened. A German sergeant, with a red face and bristling eyebrows, came in with a slight bow, which Bob silently returned. He had been recalling as many German words as he could, in the last half hour, seeing how much he would need them, and now he

addressed the sergeant with a kind of doubtful determination:

"I want food, please, and a fire."

The grammar and accent were remarkable, he knew, but he thought the words made sense. The sergeant looked keenly at him, seeming to understand, for he glanced at the hearth, then back at Bob, drew his lips close together, nodded and went out.

He left the door unlocked, so Bob opened it and looked out, for the sun had risen and he thought the cold outer air would be pleasanter than the chilly dampness of his prison. The sentry beyond the wire netting looked sharply at him, but continued his walk. On the other side of the wire fence was a square yard, on which opened another low wooden building, with smoke rising from its chimney. Bob guessed this to be the kitchen, for now he heard the tramp of many feet on his left, and along the inclosed lane in the netting came a long line of prisoners, carrying tin cups and basins, and marching toward the open space.

Some of them were talking in a tongue that was absolutely strange to him. They grew silent as they neared the sentries and then Bob saw by the blouses of their worn and faded uniforms that they were Russians. They must number five hundred, he thought, and they were followed by perhaps two

hundred French infantrymen, many with bandaged arms or hands, and some walking with difficulty, by the aid of a cane or a comrade's supporting shoulder.

At about the time the first of them reached the other building, a soldier neared Bob's door carrying a pail in one hand and a smoking dish in the other. Bob's mouth watered at sight of it, and he quickly made way for the man, who deposited the basin of what appeared to be coffee on the table, the pail of water on the floor, and drew from under his arm a brown loaf of bread, which he put down beside the coffee.

"*Zwei tage,*" he remarked, pointing to it with a serious air.

Zwei Bob knew, but two what? He could not think what *tage* was. He remembered the fire though, and said hastily to the soldier, who had already turned to go, "More wood."

The man looked uncertain, bowed, and went out. Bob sat down to his breakfast, drinking the odd-tasting substitute for coffee without criticism. It was at least hot and comforting, and a big piece wrenched from one end of the loaf made him feel another man. Suddenly, the meaning of *tage* came to him. Of course—days—"two days." That was what the soldier had said. He had pointed to the bread, which was evidently supposed to last for that

length of time. The thought was not very cheering unless the rest of his diet was forthcoming. He had observed a very marked difference in his treatment as an officer from that accorded to the enlisted men who were prisoners. This distinction, Bob surmised, was made more for the benefit of the German soldiery, whose respect for an officer must be maintained at any cost, than for a more generous reason. But he was evidently to be treated with outward marks of civility, though his comforts, he foresaw, would be scarce enough, unless he could open communication with some outside means of supply.

He could easily have eaten half the loaf of bread then and there, but the soldier's words had made an impression, and he got up without taking another bite. His door was still unlocked and he stood on the threshold, trying to get some warmth from the rays of the sun, for his fire had not been replenished. The wire fence, fully ten feet high and barbed at the top, ran along the front of the barrack at a distance of about a dozen steps from it, the only break being the wire lane extending to the open yard in the center. Down this lane a sentry walked, commanding a fine view of both sides of the yard. A short distance to the left another sentry's beat began, in front of the adjoining barrack.

At about a hundred feet to the right and left of

Bob's door the wire curved suddenly in to the barrack wall, leaving only that length for a walk, and enclosing about five doors, so far as he could see down the line. One of these doors opened into the room next his, where he had heard the subdued sounds of the early morning, and as he stood there shivering, fastening his coat before trying a walk up the little inclosure in the biting wind, he became aware that his neighbor was also standing on his own threshold.

The French soldiers were just returning from across the yard with their ration, hurrying back to shelter with the steaming bowls, and Bob could see that the man was watching them, absorbed and motionless. Before he caught more than a glimpse of the tall figure he had gone back into his room. Bob returned likewise for his helmet, thinking unpleasant things of the soldier who was leaving him to freeze for want of a little wood, when a footstep caused him to turn expectantly. Instead of the stolid German orderly, he saw an erect, distinguished looking man in the faded blue uniform of a French infantry Captain. He stood just outside the door, and as Bob turned he bowed and extended his hand, a bright smile lighting up his pale, thin face.

"I am your neighbor, Monsieur the Lieutenant," he said, in correct if rather painstaking English.

Bob stepped out and shook his hand warmly. How eagerly he welcomed the company of this unfortunate Frenchman was told by his face and the grip of his fingers before he said, "I'm very glad to see you. Can't you come in?"

The Frenchman's eyes looked pleased at the warmth of his welcome by the American, whose frank young face he was scanning with both liking and pity, but he cast a look at the sentry before he answered, "I think he will not object. We can at least wait until he does."

They entered Bob's room, where Bob drew forward the stool, reserving for himself the low table, which was solidly built of timber.

"I am Philippe Bertrand, Captain of French infantry," said his guest, seating himself and removing his cap from his black hair as he spoke. "May I ask your name and where you were taken?"

Bob willingly responded to the friendly inquiry, and for every word he spoke he had an interested listener. He told the Frenchman where he came from and the length of his service, finally asking, "Can you give me any idea of where we are, Captain?"

Bertrand pronounced a German name which meant nothing to Bob. The added information that the place was situated in Prussia made things a little clearer.

"How long have you been here, Captain?" he asked with an inward shudder.

"Six months," replied Bertrand, a shadow coming over his thin face. "Before that I was fighting since 1914 near the northern end of the British line in Flanders. That is how I learned English."

"But are you the only officer imprisoned here?" asked Bob. "There seem to be a great number of other prisoners."

"There are no other French or British officers here now. They have been transferred elsewhere. There were Russian officers next to me until last week, but they have been taken away. There was some rumor of an armistice signed between Russia and our enemies." He frowned, looking anxiously at Bob. "You have heard nothing of it?"

Bob had heard little of an actual armistice signed, but he told all he knew of the troubled state of things in Russia. Then, in answer to Bertrand's eager questions, he told all the war news that the last six months could recall to his mind, ending by an account of America's great preparations, the story of his own service overseas and his capture inside the German lines.

Bertrand listened with rapt attention, for little news had filtered into the prison, and that little cut to a German pattern. At some of Bob's words he looked sadly downcast, but at everything relating

to the preparations of America for the combat, he brightened perceptibly. At last he rose and again held out his hand.

"Our doors will be locked in a moment," he explained for his sudden departure. "This is the hour of exercise, though lately I cannot much avail myself of it."

"You mean we may walk in that little space in front at this time?" inquired Bob, disgustedly. "Won't they let us go anywhere else?"

"Sometimes they will. I myself am not sure, so you must ask," the Frenchman responded. "I am no longer able to walk far, and the little promenade before my door does well enough."

"You mean you are ill?" asked Bob, looking with sinking heart at the pale face of his companion.

"I have a sort of fever, I think. It comes and goes, but it is rather irksome. Thank you very kindly for your talk. It has given me food for new thoughts."

Bob held him back a second. "When may I see you again, Captain? I have such a lot to ask you about. You don't know how much it means having you here beside me."

"This evening, perhaps," was the rather doubtful answer. "My guard sometimes leaves the door unlocked at supper-time since I am alone here. It

is to save himself trouble, I think. It was he who told me of the arrival of an American officer."

He bowed again, as he turned to go, with a bright smile that showed two rows of white, even teeth, and when his eyes lighted up Bob realized that he was a young man, in spite of the sobering effects of fever and privation.

The guard reappeared with a belated armful of wood, as Bob reëntered his room after his new friend's departure. He carried his keys, too, with which, after building up the cold hearth, he prepared to lock the door, but was prevented by a shout from the nearest sentry. Some one was crossing the yard preceded by a sergeant at rigid attention. The guard quickly opened the door again, flattening himself against it as he hastily announced to Bob, " The Herr Major! "

CHAPTER XIII

"COME IN, COMRADE!"

Bob had not seen any commissioned German officers since his arrival at the prison camp, but this one he guessed to be the Commandant, by the dignified importance of his gait, and the effect he produced upon the guard and sentry. The officer approached Bob's doorway with deliberate step and clanking sword, looking keenly along the barrack front as though for anything needing his attention. He was a short, stocky, middle-aged man, with flaxen hair and a fair skin, his chin slightly raised as he shifted his bright, intelligent glance from one point to another. When he reached Bob's door and caught sight of the prisoner, he gave him a long look, then a quick nod by way of salutation. Bob returned the nod, standing silently by his table when the officer entered, followed by the sergeant with much clatter of boots. As Bob saw his face plainly he found little in it to like. The prim, set lips and cold, light-gray eyes told of a rigid and ungenerous nature; of the sort of man who prefers rules to justice. Bob had no time to make any more reflections before the major seated himself on

the stool brought quickly forward by the sergeant, and, fixing his eyes on the prisoner, began a long question in rapid German, accompanied by waves of the hand to emphasize his words.

Bob silently shook his head and said in English, as soon as there was a pause in the flow of words, "I cannot speak German, Herr Major."

The great man frowned angrily, his face growing red with the quick temper that is aroused by trifles and as easily calmed. He stared at Bob for a moment, as though trying to discover whether or not he was speaking the truth, then evidently deciding that he was, he puckered his brows and began irritably in English.

"To me at once your name, your rank, your corps and their position tell. And the event of how you at our hands were taken." He stopped rather suddenly, his labored English apparently failing him.

Bob began promptly, and repeated what he had already told the officers at Petit-Bois. He had managed to satisfy them without giving any definite information, and he had little trouble now in being sufficiently vague to make his answers valueless, for his questioner did not know enough of the American positions to contradict him. The inquiry was ended sooner than it might have been by the evident unwillingness felt by the German to struggle on in English. Bob suspected that half his rapid an-

swers had not been understood. When a pause finally ensued he took the questioning boldly into his own hands and said:

"Herr Major, as a prisoner of war, I should like to make a request."

"What is it?" snapped the officer in German, roused from his thoughts and staring with an irritable unfriendliness at the American prisoner.

"I should like more room for exercise, and sufficient food and fire." Bob thought he might as well speak his mind at once. He did not see what harm could come of his demands, which were quite within his rights, even if they should be unheeded.

The major seemed little impressed by them. He got up, nodding shortly in acknowledgment, but the only reply he vouchsafed was the inquiry, in English, "You some money perhaps have?"

Bob was surprised but he answered truthfully, "Yes, a little."

"A canteen there is." The major jerked his head in the direction of the kitchen building. "There you more food can sometimes buy. We cannot feed our prisoners as you live in America!" This was said with a flash of spiteful fury not lost upon Bob, who saw in that moment how little, beyond the most grudging sustenance, he or his countrymen could expect at German hands.

The major went out without any further words,

accompanied by a shout from the sergeant to the sentries to present arms, and a great display of military stiffness on the part of Bob's guard, who seemed to be lingering about the premises for the privilege of saluting a second time. Bob drew a sigh of relief when the major's sword had clanked itself out of ear-shot along the barracks, devoutly hoping he would not make long visits in the quarters of the humbler prisoners. He felt sure they would agree with him that the less seen of the Herr Major the better.

He dropped down on the stool, now restored to his own use, and sat wondering drearily how on earth he could pass the time in any degree of cheerfulness. He regretted now not having gone outdoors while he had the chance, and decided that he must adopt indoor exercises at once if his health was not to suffer from the unnatural confinement. Getting up an appetite, though, was certainly a thing to be avoided. Bob's thoughts of the future were dim and purposeless, and he did his best just now to keep them so. He greatly hoped he would not realize the depth of his misfortune, and that the half incredulous state of mind that made him live on from moment to moment, as though his imprisonment were something strange and passing, might last a little longer. One ray of comfort he had, and he clung to it when despair seemed very near

him. Solitude was the thing he most dreaded, and Captain Bertrand's friendly presence had been like a ray of light out of utter darkness. Bob had always had an affectionate family or cheerful friends around him. He did not know how to live alone and could hardly have risen above the utter depression of it. In thinking of the young Frenchman's brave calmness he found more courage to face things than he had thought he possessed.

The guard had locked his door, and Bob particularly wanted to find out about the canteen the hospitable Commandant had spoken of. He took out his money from the inside pocket lining of his blouse where it was hidden, and counted it carefully. He had just forty francs. The ten he had given to the old peasant would have been welcome now, but he did not regret them.

As the morning wore on, and the door remained locked, Bob's active body demanded movement of some kind. He tried a balancing performance with the stool, vaulted over the low table, went through the manual of arms without a gun, and had a fencing bout with an imaginary sword and opponent. Then, his invention failing him, he dropped down on his stool again and resumed his principal occupation of the past two days—wondering. He wondered what time dinner was, and if it would be more substantial than breakfast. Anyway he had the

promise of food at the canteen to look forward to. He wondered if writing materials could be bought there, too, and, if so, whether a letter from here would ever reach the outside world through the Commandant's hands. He remembered that he had not asked Bertrand in what part of Prussia they were. The name of some near-by city might be more familiar to him than the town outside the camp. He could not understand why Bertrand had been kept there when the other officers were transferred, but he was very thankful for his own sake that it had been so.

After a long while the door was unlocked, to the accompanying sounds of the prisoners forming in ranks outside the barrack, and his guard appeared with the same steaming basin that had held the acorn coffee at breakfast. As he put it down on the table and turned to leave, Bob plunged into German. "I go," he began, pointing emphatically across the yard, the word canteen not being at his command, "get bread."

The soldier looked puzzled, curious, and finally a light broke over his heavy countenance. He nodded and went out, saying something in reply which Bob did not understand, but in which the word "sergeant" occurred.

Becoming resigned by now to patient waiting, Bob sat down to find what he had for dinner. So

far as he could make out with the help of the metal spoon, the bowl held a kind of cabbage soup, with a few shreds of vegetables lurking near the bottom. It did not look inviting, but he was much too hungry to be critical, and he emptied the bowl in five minutes, finding the soup not bad, with another chunk of black bread to accompany it. The chief trouble was there was not enough of it. He could have eaten a whole dinner afterward without any trouble. At thought of the people at home who would so gladly send him money and supplies if only they could reach him, he resolved to try hard to get them some news of his whereabouts.

Soon after he finished eating, the sergeant with the bristling eyebrows appeared, announcing that he had come to conduct the lieutenant to the canteen.

Bob got up with alacrity, put on his helmet and heavy coat, and followed his guide out into the cold air, along the wire lane past the watchful sentry, who turned and followed in their wake. Bob was mildly amused at the idea of his attempting to escape. He had about as much chance as if he were a wild animal in an iron cage, and would have received just as cordial a welcome throughout Prussia. Whichever way he turned his eyes met lines of high wire fencing, or the glistening bayonets of the sentries patrolling the camp in every direction.

The canteen was no more than a room just off the kitchen, fitted with shelves stocked with goods. A corporal in charge was seated behind a table. He rose at sight of a customer and made the usual slight bow, after a glance at Bob's shoulder-straps. Bob saw but a scant display of eatables on the shelves, but after a careful inspection he selected two cans of herring, a small loaf of black bread to supplement his two days' ration, and a jar of strange looking yellow marmalade. For these luxuries he paid three francs and felt that his captors had got the best of it.

The bargain concluded, the sergeant led him promptly back across the yard, where several hundred prisoners had gathered, carrying picks and shovels, and evidently starting out for an afternoon's work. Bob almost wished he might join them as he looked keenly around, trying to see if the companions of his journey from Petit-Bois were there. Two big Russians, looking about them with mild, patient eyes as they leaned upon their tools, stood close by the wire netting, and, as Bob passed by, a Frenchman pushed his head in between their shoulders with a friendly smile in his direction and a nod of recognition. Bob longed to stop and ask him how the wounded men were faring, and what sort of treatment they were receiving, but the inexorable sentry dogged his steps, and a nod and

smile in return was all the communication possible.

There were no writing materials on sale at the canteen, so Bob demanded some of the sergeant. In answer he merely promised to obtain them from the Commandant, and Bob foresaw another delay.

After this short diversion he paced his floor restlessly until dark, which brought with it the guard, carrying another bowl of coffee, and a welcome armful of wood. The soldier lighted the lamp and went out, leaving the door open. In a second Bob swallowed the decoction in the bowl, hurriedly made his way out and approached his neighbor's door. It was closed, but yielded to his touch, and saying softly, "May I come in, Captain?" he put his head through the crack.

The room was dimly lighted and looked much the same as Bob's own. The cot was pulled like his before the feeble fire, and on it lay the French officer, who raised his head at sight of Bob to say warmly, though with little strength in his voice, "Come in, comrade!"

Bob closed the door behind him, overcome with pity and a dreadful feeling of helplessness at sight of Bertrand's long, thin figure shivering beneath the flimsy blankets. "You are ill, Captain? What can I do?" he stammered.

Then, realizing that Bertrand was in the clutches

of a chill, and in no state to answer questions, he steadied his nerves and took things into his own hands with energy.

"You've eaten nothing," he said, looking at the bowl of coffee which the guard had placed on the stool beside the cot. "This is hot, at least." He broke a few crumbs of bread from the loaf on the stool into the steaming bowl and, raising Bertrand's shivering shoulders, put a spoonful to his lips. "Take it anyway, it will warm you," he urged, finally persuading the sick man to swallow a few spoonfuls, after which he tucked the blankets about him and built up the flickering fire.

"Wait a minute," he said presently, rising and darting to the door again. In a moment he was back, bringing one of his own blankets, which he wrapped around Bertrand's shaking body with anxious thoroughness.

"Your blanket?" faltered Bertrand, as his fit of shivering slowly lessened. "You must not give me that! This will pass in a few moments. It always comes before the fever."

"I have enough," said Bob, raising a spoonful of coffee again to Bertrand's lips. "Drink all this now, can't you? I've heated it at the fire, and it will help keep you warm. I am going to find a doctor for you, if it's humanly possible."

"He comes now and then," said Bertrand, rais-

ing himself to drink the hot liquid obediently, though his breath came quick and hard as he spoke. "It was he who would not have me moved the day the other French officers were transferred. You had better go now, comrade. The guard will not leave the door unlocked again if the sergeant discovers it."

Bob nodded, looking with anxious eyes at Bertrand's face, now losing its pallor for a flush, as no longer trembling, he lay wearily motionless. Bob renewed the fire again as well as he could, and readjusted the blankets, took an unwilling leave, only consoled at seeing that the chill had passed and that Bertrand seemed inclined to sleep.

At his own door he encountered the guard who, by the light of the lantern he held, looked sullenly at his enterprising American prisoner and rattled the keys suggestively. Bob gave him no time to voice his displeasure, but on entering the room said in such German as he could muster:

"Where is the doctor? When can he come here?"

The soldier looked dubious, and muttered that he did not know.

Bob's anger was swiftly rising at this brutal neglect of poor Bertrand. He turned savagely on the guard. "Go and find out!" he shouted, in execrable German, but in a voice that roused the

echo of obedience to authority in the soldier's dull mind. He went out more quickly than Bob had ever seen him move before. In a moment he was back again, and the sergeant with him. Bob repeated his demand, but got no more satisfaction than the assurance that, "The Herr Doctor will certainly be here to-morrow."

"If he isn't, you will take me to the Commandant," he declared in a burst of righteous indignation. "And now," he added, a cold blast from the door reminding him of his own need, "I want another blanket. I gave one of mine to Captain Bertrand."

Not all of this speech was comprehensible to the sergeant, for Bob's German was very strange indeed, and all the words he did not know were supplemented by French or English terms. But the blanket request he did understand and seemed highly doubtful about being able to grant. "I will try, Herr Lieutenant," was the most he would say, and a moment later Bob was left alone.

He went to bed in his overcoat, wrapped in his single blanket, for he had no hope of receiving a second one that night. The little fire that blew hither and thither, in the wind that rushed down the chimney, could not keep him from shivering, but after a while he went to sleep.

When morning dawned Bob got up to the sound

of hundreds of clattering boots, and throwing off his overcoat, went through some brisk exercises for half an hour until his chilled blood ran warm again. While he did it he came to a resolution in behalf of the unfortunate Frenchman lying sick and solitary next door, and although he had little hope of gaining any favors from the Commandant or his subordinates, he resolved to make the effort. Defiance was his only weapon, a poor enough one since he was helpless in his captors' hands, but it had already achieved more with his guard than had politeness. Anyway, he felt that his angry feelings must find expression somehow.

He struggled to make the fire burn until the soldier entered with his coffee. No more bread was yet forthcoming, though thanks to his visit to the canteen, Bob still had a little. He turned to the guard, getting up from his seat on the cot before the fire. "Where is my blanket?" he demanded.

The man muttered something about the matter having been referred to the Commandant.

"Rats!" ejaculated Bob, thrusting his hands deep in his trousers pockets and staring disgustedly at the guard's heavy red face.

The soldier's little blue eyes lighted up with a vague alarm. He evidently felt the American to be an unknown quantity, of whom anything might be expected. Bob had already noticed furtive

glances cast at him, as though sudden violence on his part was not unlikely. He felt decidedly like realizing the guard's suspicions now.

"Go get the sergeant," he said at last, speaking more calmly.

When the man had gone Bob took the opportunity to visit Bertrand, whom he found asleep with his untasted breakfast beside him, the blankets tossed about his cot bearing witness to a troubled night. Bob touched his hand and felt it hot and dry. He went softly out and found the sergeant awaiting him.

"Where is the doctor?" was Bob's first inquiry.

"He will come," the sergeant assured him, with such certainty that Bob felt there was some reason to believe him.

He pointed across to the canteen, saying firmly, "I will buy a blanket now."

No objection was raised to this, and he decided that it was probably just what was expected of him. At the canteen he found a small stock of thin, gray blankets, one of which he bought, reluctantly paying for it twelve francs out of his remaining thirty-seven. He bought, also, for seven more francs, a cotton shirt, a razor, and another loaf of bread.

As they recrossed the yard twenty minutes later, through the midst of a crowd of Russians, Bob saw

an officer coming out of Bertrand's room. He quickened his steps on the sergeant's informing him that this was the Herr Doctor who had come as promised. Bob met him in the narrow space before the barrack and spoke eagerly, after a quick bow of salutation, which the other gravely returned.

"Captain Bertrand—do you think he is any better?"

The military doctor surrendered the leather case he carried to an orderly who followed him and looked attentively at Bob, seeming more struck by his atrocious German than by what he had said. He was a gray-haired, shrewd-looking man, with a quiet, self-contained manner. In a moment he said in English:

"I can speak English a little. What would you say?"

Bob answered, with great relief at the loosening of his tongue, "I wish to ask you about Captain Bertrand. He seems very ill. Is there nothing that can be done for him? He has no care at all—I don't understand it." Bob's indignation got a little the better of him. His face flushed and his voice hardened.

The doctor nodded. "He should be transferred to a hospital. But with present difficulties it may two or three weeks take."

"Well, have you left him anything? Any

quinine? I could give it to him in whatever doses you prescribe."

The doctor glanced keenly at the eager young American. His face seemed to say that Bob spoke without knowing all the facts. "I have left a little—yes," he assented. "Enough is not to be had."

Bob struggled with his feelings, uncertain whether the doctor's calmness was callous indifference or if he were simply doing his best with inadequate supplies and help. He thought he detected a little regret and human interest in his voice, in speaking of Bertrand's sad case, but the German was not disposed to be communicative. He seemed ready to move away now, but Bob took a sudden resolution.

"At least, doctor, you can obtain permission for me to sleep in Captain Bertrand's room and look after him until the fever goes. It is cruel to leave him alone with no help or companionship. Let me take care of him until you can arrange for his transfer."

The doctor thought silently for a moment. "I can see no objection to that," he said at last. "I will do it, if possible it is."

He nodded in a not unfriendly way, and walked quickly off, leaving Bob saying to himself in doubtful irritation, "Will you really do it, or just say

you will do it, like the others?" He had somewhat more confidence in this man than in the other Germans about him, for he felt that a doctor's fellow-feeling extends with his profession beyond the borders of his own country, though he judged only by the French and British and American doctors he had seen among the enemy's wounded.

When he reached the door of his room the sergeant was standing by his table, and at sight of him Bob's spirits gave a sudden bound. On the table were laid some sheets of paper, envelopes, half a dozen post-cards, a few stamps and a pencil. The sergeant took note of the amount on his fingers and after a hasty calculation said, "Two francs, Herr Lieutenant."

Bob produced them, desperately eager for the chance to write, however hopeless such an attempt might be. But first he took advantage of the remaining free moments to visit Bertrand's room. The Frenchman was sitting on his cot, looking spent and weary, but at sight of Bob he smiled and held out his hand.

"My friend, you must take back your blanket," he said earnestly, as Bob approached the cot and sat down beside him. "I did not think last night when you so generously left it."

Bob reassured him on that score, and hastily told of his interview with the doctor, and of the hope

he felt of being allowed to sleep in Bertrand's room. This seemed to afford the sick man great comfort. He silently shook Bob's hand with a grateful look that told more than words of the lonely misery he had suffered. His fever had gone down, though his thin face was still flushed and his eyes overbright. Bob heated over the fire the coffee left from breakfast and made him drink it, though he could not be persuaded to eat the hard bread. Bob's own stores of herring and pumpkin-seed marmalade were alike useless. He resolved to ransack the canteen again for something palatable, for Bertrand was rapidly losing strength on his meagre diet.

Bob did not dare lead him to count on having his company at night until permission was assured. But he felt, when he left him, that even the hope had brought a little cheerfulness into the unfortunate officer's long day, which he must pass lying spent with fever in his lonely prison. Bob wanted to ask him if his letters had been answered, and what chance there was of receiving news from home or of sending it there, but he was afraid of awakening unhappy thoughts, and decided to postpone his questions until Bertrand's fever should have entirely gone.

He sat down at his own table, after the doors were locked again, and slowly took up the indelible pencil lying on the paper before him, with a sad

look coming over his face. Longings for home and freedom wrenched his heart now as he thought of what to write, and the hopelessness of trying to say anything, since all must pass under the eyes of the Commandant, made him lay down his pencil almost in despair. But to assure his family that he was alive and well was his greatest wish, and he felt a reasonable hope of having this much sent on.

At last he chose the post-cards, and writing the brief news that he was well, a prisoner in Germany, and sent his love to all at home, he addressed three of them to his mother, his father and to Lucy, hoping that one of the three might find its way in time to Governor's Island. Considering the difficult and roundabout means of transportation, coupled with little willingness on the part of his captors to fulfil the prisoners' wishes, he saw, as he thought it over again, that the chances were slim.

As he wrote Lucy's name her face came before him, as she had looked when he said good-bye to her three months before. Her eyes were bright with tears, but she was bravely smiling, and he could hear her voice again, gay and cheerful, but with a world of tender affection behind it as she said, "We'll never stop thinking of you!"

He knew she never had, and the constant thoughts of those who waited for him were the source of more courage than they knew, now that

Bob in his loneliness had such need of courage. But he felt, just then, he would give anything on earth for the sight of one familiar face among the strangers about him, of whom only Bertrand and the French soldier prisoner had given him the grateful tribute of a friendly glance. Few wishes were granted in that prison camp, but at this time of strange happenings Bob's wish was nearer fulfilment than he dreamed.

Dinner was no more substantial than yesterday's, but Bob helped it out with a pickled herring. While he was eating it without enthusiasm, a vision of Karl's cream-puffs, as they had so often come, at Bob's special request, puffy, round and inviting, to the Gordons' table, made him smile with a touch of irony. It would be hard work persuading Karl to make him any now, supposing the two met again.

In the afternoon, the sergeant brought him the welcome news that he would be permitted to sleep in Bertrand's room. Eager to make sure of the privilege, Bob asked to have his cot moved immediately, and two soldiers carried it into the next room at the sergeant's orders. Bob stood in his doorway while this was going on, looking curiously at a little group of what he guessed, from the numerous guards about them, to be newly-arrived prisoners, though they were too far off to be distinguished.

He asked his guard who they were, without expecting a satisfactory answer, for the soldier was always non-committal, whether from natural sullenness or in obedience to orders, Bob could not decide. But this time his eyes brightened at the question, and after glancing down toward the further barracks which the men had entered, he gave Bob a queer look and said, "American prisoners."

"What!" Bob's self-control was gone for a moment. He stared at the man in blank amazement.

The guard nodded, adding with a kind of triumph in his voice, "Eleven were brought in this morning."

That was the extent of his information, but Bob pondered it most of the night, while he kept alive the fire and tended his feverish companion, whose greatest comfort it seemed was to know Bob's friendly presence close at hand.

In the morning he went out the moment the door was unlocked, leaving his wretched coffee untasted. A light snow had fallen during the night, and the air was cold and sparkling, with the sun just risen. This was the hour when all the prisoners crossed the yard for breakfast. He searched hundreds of faces, French and Russian, before at last a little knot of downcast United States infantrymen came by, soup basins in hand. Some of them were wounded. Bob's heart beat hard and his eyes

filled with hot tears of sympathy and comradeship. He could hardly see their faces, but all at once a hand was thrust through the wire netting beside him, and a voice trembling with excitement cried, "Bob Gordon!"

Bob stared through the netting with misty, unbelieving eyes.

"Lieutenant, I meant to say," stammered Sergeant Cameron, as Bob, too overcome at the sight of him to answer, clasped his outstretched hand.

"We won, though," the sergeant said in his ear, in the instant before his hand was withdrawn to resume the march across the yard, and those words echoed in Bob's ears above the noisy orders of the German guards ordering on the men, who, one and all, had paused to watch the meeting between the two Americans with friendly, understanding eyes.

The prisoners were from his father's regiment. This was the thought uppermost in Bob's mind. But they had won the fight!

CHAPTER XIV

A LETTER FROM LONDON

Marie had taken William and Happy over beyond the infantry quarters to watch the afternoon drill. The sight of those hard-working young recruits, treading so resolutely the snow-packed ground, seemed to have a fascination for the Belgian girl. She would watch them for long moments, with serious, earnest eyes, as though in the strength and readiness of America's growing army she saw the distant promise of freedom for her native land.

The drill was a good one, and the soldiers marched with the trained precision of seasoned troops. They had done well in the weeks past. Lucy saw a staff colonel, walking by, give a quick nod of approval in their direction. The four girls who studied and played together had come from the Officers' Club, after a hard game of bowls, to join the little crowd which had gathered to watch the drill with the intentness that came of knowing how sorely every trained man was needed now.

Marian was talking eagerly to Anne about the first-aid class. It was Friday and the next morning's lesson would be the third in the course, and already the girls felt that they began to know something about nursing. Marian had lost all fear of Miss Thomas and her demands, and at the last lesson had willingly been wrapped in bandages of every sort, to demonstrate the neat work of her teacher's skilful fingers.

"It's lots more interesting making Red Cross dressings when you know how they are used," she said to Anne. "The nursing is much the hardest part for me. I still get awfully mixed sometimes."

"That's the part I like best," said Lucy, her eyes still following the marching men, who were executing a difficult turn. "I like taking care of sick people anyway."

"Too bad you aren't old enough to be a nurse," remarked Julia. She was looking apprehensively at her puppy as William came toward them. "Then maybe you'd have patients more graceful than I am." She laughed at the recollection of some of Lucy's energetic treatments.

"I spilled the water down your neck only once," objected Lucy indignantly; "you know we got along beautifully last time."

"I know it," admitted Julia. "I can't do it

nearly so well as you, myself. Oh, look at that little beast!"

Happy came careering up, as William and Marie started for home, and began a friendly tussle with his brother, who had a quieter disposition and had stayed obediently at Julia's side.

"Oh, behave, Happy!" cried Lucy, making an ineffectual grab in his direction. "You certainly picked out the bad one to give us, Julia, or else William brings him up badly. Two mittens and a glove of Father's have gone this week."

"I'll take him, Lucy," said William, rushing to the rescue, in terror as usual when the puppies were together, of getting them mixed up beyond recognition, since they grew too fast to make the wearing of collars possible. "This one's mine," he declared, seizing his puppy and carrying him off, a squirming, indignant armful.

"Poor little Mac always gets the worst of it," said Julia laughing. "He isn't the fighting kind. Let's let William get ahead a little before we go, so as to keep the peace."

"You and Anne come to our house and we'll go over the first-aid lesson for to-morrow now. It's much easier when we do it together," suggested Lucy, as they walked back across the parade.

"All right, we will," said Julia. "Stop with me, Anne, while I get my book, and then we'll come

right over. I bet Marian is in a hurry to get home out of the cold."

Marian laughed, but she willingly joined Lucy in running over to General's Row, when they came within sight of the Gordons' house.

"Cousin James came home early to-day," she said, as they went up the steps, for she had spied Major Gordon's tall figure walking quickly from Headquarters as they crossed the parade.

"Did he?" asked Lucy, opening the door. "I hope he doesn't have to go off somewhere to-night."

Then, as she entered the sitting-room, her heart gave a dreadful throb, and she stood speechless on the threshold. Her mother was standing by the window. Her face was ashy pale, and tears were running down her cheeks, while she listened with motionless intensity to her husband's words. Major Gordon, still wearing his overcoat, was speaking low and earnestly. His face was turned from the door, but his head was bent and one of his hands gripped hard on the chair behind him.

"Mother! Father! What is it? Is it Bob?" cried Lucy, all her courage forgotten and a dreadful fear clutching at her heart that made her voice break and her strength almost fail her. She seized her father's arm and looked with terrified questioning into his face.

"Yes, little daughter, it is," said her father

gently. His face was white, too, and he looked tired and worn.

"Tell me, what is it?" Lucy whispered.

"We don't know. All they have heard at Washington is that he never returned from his last scouting expedition. I telegraphed for any more details they could give me, but the Adjutant General has sent back word that he knows nothing more. We must hope for the best."

Lucy drew her hand away, and turning, threw her arms around her mother's neck, vainly trying to check the sobs that choked her and the tears that blinded her eyes. She could not speak a word of comfort, but perhaps her mother felt, as she held her, what she would have said, if words had not been quite beyond her.

Marian stole out to meet Julia and Anne before they reached the door. Her eyes were wet, too, and her heart throbbed with a sympathy that took her far from herself to a new depth of understanding.

At last Lucy raised her head, dashing the tears from her hot cheeks. "Mr. Harding could find out something!" she cried, her voice trembling with a bitter rebellion against this dreadful uncertainty. "He was so near to Bob, surely he will send us word of whatever he knows!"

Major Gordon shook his head with a sad stern-

ness. "Don't blame him, little daughter. The same dispatches that brought this news reported Dick wounded and missing, after a German raid on our first line trenches."

Lucy could stand there no longer. She ran blindly out and up to her own room, where she sank down on her little sofa and buried her face among the pillows.

In the dark days which followed, Marian was Lucy's greatest comfort. Lucy would not say all she feared or even all she hoped to her mother, who had enough to bear without any bursts of unhappiness or groundless hopefulness on Lucy's part. But Marian listened with quiet and helpful sympathy in the hours when Lucy's patience and courage utterly gave way, and sleep refused to come.

The whole garrison shared the Gordons' trouble, and in the friendly spirit of comradeship which unites our army, all the people tried to show their heartfelt sympathy. Mrs. Houston brought her Red Cross work to Mrs. Gordon's, and the two women sat for long hours together, making whole boxes of slings and dressings, for work was more bearable than idleness. Major Gordon found it so, too, for he kept at his duties until late at night, and seemed to find nothing else worth doing.

Lucy and Marian went as usual to school, though

Lucy could not learn her lessons and Miss Ellis did not reproach her. She was thankful, though, to be among other girls for a while, and away from the misery of her own thoughts. In the fortnight that had gone by since Bob was reported missing Lucy seemed to have passed through a year of her life, and, grown strangely quiet and purposeless, she followed Marian's suggestions without a murmur. She took the change in her cousin with no more than a vague surprise at her independence. She and her mother only felt that Marian's cheerful presence was a comfort, and her affectionate understanding of Lucy's grief promised to make of the two girls firm and devoted friends for ever after.

One day at noon Lucy came into the house with Marian to find her mother and father again together. Only this time her mother's face, lately so pale and sad, was touched with a gleam of her old brightness. Almost a smile hovered over her lips, and at sight of it Lucy sprang forward, crying, "What is it, Mother? Oh, tell me quick!"

Major Gordon did not look altogether cheerful as he turned to her, but his face was brave and hopeful.

"Don't expect too much," he said slowly, but Mrs. Gordon put a hand on Lucy's shoulders with a smile that brought a flood of joy to her heart.

"He's alive and unhurt, Lucy," she said, her voice trembling. "Read this."

A letter had lain on the table, and now Lucy snatched it from her mother's hand. With her heart pounding in her throat she dropped down on the floor, oblivious to all about her.

The writing was strange, and, stranger still, the letter was postmarked London. With shaky fingers Lucy drew out two sheets of ruled paper, covered with a neat, legible writing. She turned quickly to the signature. It was:

JOHN ENRIGHT,
Corporal Ninth Lancashires,
By Nurse Everitt.

Amazed, Lucy found the beginning and read:

ST. ANTHONY'S HOSPITAL,
LONDON

December 5th.

MRS. JAMES GORDON,

Dear Madam: No doubt you are wondering what I can have to say to you, as we are strangers to each other, so perhaps the best way for me to begin is by explaining just how I came to write.

I may say that I am a Corporal in the Ninth Lancashire regiment of foot, and, up to my being wounded and sent home from France last week, I have fought at a point where our lines touch with

the French and Americans. I would tell you the exact spot, but this is not allowed. There was an advance made here a short time ago, in which we reënforced them, resulting in the capture of a French village which the Germans had fortified with no end of care. It appears that some aviator managed to send back news of their new line by carrier pigeon, and this information helped us considerably. Anyway, we occupied the place, and, to make it short, I was stopped with a bullet in my leg just before the Germans fell back.

In the house where some women of the village helped the doctors care for the wounded, I was nursed by a woman who spoke English almost as well as anybody. She was German, she said, but in spite of that she was a good sort, and she sat all night with me when I was pretty near wild with a broken knee.

Next day but one I was recommended to be sent home, but before I left the village she asked me to do something for her as soon as I got back to England. Of course I was glad to pay for some of her kindness, if I could. She asked me to write to America, to Mrs. James Gordon, whose name and address she gave me on a paper, and tell her that her son was alive and not wounded, but a prisoner in Germany.

Being willing to do a good turn for a friend, and ally, as well as to pay the German woman for her care of me, I am writing at first opportunity. That is as much as I can remember that she said, for I was feeling too badly to think much, except to wonder at her, a German, asking me this. So hoping

you will excuse the liberty, and with best wishes, I remain,

Yours truly,
JOHN ENRIGHT,
Corporal Ninth Lancashires,
By Nurse Everitt.

Lucy did not read the last sentences of the kindly Englishman's letter. Warm tears were pouring down her cheeks, tears of relief and thankfulness, that, however hard the burden left to bear, they knew that Bob's life was spared. She repeated Elizabeth's name with wondering gratitude, for Elizabeth it must have been who had given the soldier such a charge. For a moment joy was the only feeling in her heart, and the thought of German imprisonment did not bring the fear and dread that came afterward.

There was only quiet rejoicing in the Gordon household, for Bob's fate seemed yet darkly uncertain, but hope there was plentiful room for, and with it came returning strength and courage to face the inevitable.

Mrs. Gordon could not wait to write her gratitude to the British soldier, who even in the midst of his own suffering had not failed to do a kindness. To Elizabeth she could only speak her thanks unheard, for the faithful affection which had given back at last far more than she owed her mistress for

years of happy companionship. The extent of her debt to Elizabeth, Mrs. Gordon did not know, but for as much as she did, it was hard indeed not to be able to make an acknowledgment.

That afternoon when William was sitting on his mother's lap, listening with wide-eyed astonishment to her story of his brother, Mrs. Gordon turned a little anxiously at sight of Marian, who had come to her side to bring back the wonderful letter over which she had in turn been poring.

"Marian," she said, "I don't think we've taken very good care of you lately. I am afraid you must feel we haven't thought much about you." She searched her little cousin's face with self-reproachful eyes, but found it, to her relief, well and rosy.

Marian laughed, and sitting down on the arm of Mrs. Gordon's chair, gave her an affectionate kiss. "You needn't worry about me, Cousin Sally. I don't need half the looking after I used to. Anyway, Father will be along some day soon."

Mrs. Gordon looked thoughtfully at Marian, as she had not looked at her in the past two weeks, feeling a touch of pleasure in the midst of her heavy anxiety. Marian's dress had been carefully let out across the shoulders, but even now it was none too big for her. The look of discontent and indecision had left her face. Her once pale cheeks had a warm color, and her smiling lips had lost their baby-

ish suggestion of a pout. She had tied back her hair well out of the way before school, and her manner, though diffident still and far from boisterous, had caught more than a little of Lucy's alertness and energy. Her prettiness had changed its pathetic wistfulness for a wide-awake look far more attractive, and Mrs. Gordon saw plainly now that the friendship between Marian and Lucy, at which she had sometimes wondered a little, was very likely to endure.

Lucy was up-stairs talking to Marie, who was putting William's room in order. Both Margaret and Marie, in spite of their never having seen Bob, had shown a warm-hearted sympathy with the Gordons' trouble. But Marie had a far greater understanding of it, having known what the war meant by actual experience, and Lucy had found her one day standing in front of Bob's picture in the sitting-room, with a sad look in her serious, dark eyes. Marie had helped wonderfully during those hard days. She had kept William happy and occupied when nobody else had spirits enough to play with him, and had done a hundred little things without being told, which took away the burden of them from her mistress' shoulders. Lucy had lost no time in telling her of the good news in the soldier's letter, confident that she would sincerely share in their rejoicing.

It seemed to Lucy, though, that the thought of a German prison kept the Belgian girl from feeling much enthusiasm in her relief at Bob's safety. Perhaps her own misgivings made her fearful, but she questioned Marie anxiously.

"He's safe there, Marie, don't you think so? It's dreadfully hard—but I do hope we'll be able to send him things."

"Oh, yes, he is safe, Miss Lucy," Marie assured her hastily. She was a truthful girl, but Lucy's pleading face would not let her speak otherwise just now.

"He's away from the battle-field. It seems as if the greatest danger had been left behind. If we could only find out where he is! I'm sure he can write us before long."

"I think so, yes," said Marie hopefully, her troubled conscience reminding her as she spoke of friends and neighbors from her home whose fate in Germany no one had ever learned.

"Lots of prisoners come back, even during the war—wounded ones I mean," Lucy went on. "I suppose being a prisoner of war isn't really the worst thing that can happen to you." Somehow, Marie's hopeful words did not cheer her as they were intended to.

"Yes, many have come back," Marie responded briefly. Her invention failed her here, for once she

had seen a train filled with French and Belgian prisoners returned after a year's captivity, as it passed the Swiss frontier. The sight of those haggard and weary faces had never left her memory. At last she offered Lucy the only solution that seemed possible to her.

"Miss Lucy, if only America get ready quick and go to help fight. That is how we will have the war over. Nobody will have a free country while Germany is strong."

"I know it," Lucy sighed, feeling for the moment weighed down by a burden beyond her strength. The night of the Twenty-Eighth's departure came suddenly back to her. "Poor Mr. Harding," she thought, struck with sharp remorse at the little time she had found to lament her friend's misfortune. "But he may be safe as well as Bob—oh, how I wish we knew."

Marie finished her work and turned to Lucy, with a sudden smile lighting up her quiet face. "You must hope all is right with your brother. It is no use to fear. Good news may come."

"I wish it would hurry, then," Lucy murmured, getting up from her seat on William's bed. "I'm thankful for what we've heard, but if only we weren't so far away. The Belgians haven't an ocean between them and Germany. It is only as if their brothers were taken prisoners

into Connecticut—supposing they lived in New York."

"Yes, but the Germans they have there on top of them," said Marie quickly. "They would be very glad to have that ocean."

As never before Lucy realized how much of the war's meaning Marie knew. She felt that the quiet Belgian girl could tell her more of Bob's captors than could many about her, but somehow she was not eager to ask questions. She knew that Marie would have told her all that was pleasant to hear without asking.

Her thoughts were interrupted by Marian, who came to the door with her tam-o'-shanter on, and her coat half buttoned.

"Aren't you coming out a little while, Lucy? Let's go over to the Houstons'. I need my exercise," she added, with a mischievous curve to her lips, as she recalled Lucy's often repeated words of persuasion during the past months.

"I'm glad you really think so," said Lucy, smiling. "Because you're getting to be more than I can manage. You're not the sweet little delicate thing you were."

As she went into her own room for her hat and coat, Lucy could not help echoing her own words with a faint glow of satisfaction. She had never admitted to her mother, though Mrs. Gordon's keen

eyes guessed it, how very hard she had often found it to stick to her resolution in Marian's behalf. All during the autumn she had steadfastly cut short the things she and Julia liked best to do in favor of the things Marian could be persuaded to take part in. She had spent all her playtime with her cousin, helping her to feel at home with other girls and to learn independence, with no other reward for her patience than the knowledge that the work she had wanted was here for the asking, and as hard and discouraging as she could wish. The satisfaction of seeing Marian daily grow stronger, gayer and more companionable had not come until lately, but it was no less a very real one, and Lucy longed now to tell her mother how glad she felt to have accepted the unwelcome task. In the past weeks Marian had begun generously to return her cousin's kindness and Lucy would never look back at those dark days without a warm remembrance of Marian's never-failing sympathy.

"I'm ready," she called, after a moment. Marian answered from down-stairs, and Lucy following her, the two girls went outdoors and crossed the snow to the Houstons'.

Julia's mother had already heard the story of the letter, but both she and Julia wanted to hear it again. Nothing else was talked of while Lucy and Marian stayed, and as little else was in Lucy's mind,

she was very willing to talk about it with these old friends.

"Don't you wish you could thank that dear old Elizabeth?" cried Julia with shining eyes. "Marian, do you remember saying that she and Karl were dangerous to have around? Here they've done the Gordons the best turn in the world."

"Bob said he thought they'd get back to Germany somehow," said Lucy thoughtfully. "Elizabeth must have been right near the battle-front to see that English soldier."

"Perhaps Karl has gone into the army," suggested Marian.

"Oh, he's too old to fight," Lucy objected. "He's past fifty. What I like best to think of," she went on, brightening a little, "is that Captain Benton, whom Bob liked so much, was with him when they started. He was taken prisoner, too, most likely, so Bob won't be alone."

At last the visitors rose to go, for outside a bugler was sounding supper-call, and it was already dark.

"I never saw that dress before, Marian," said Julia, looking at the pretty red challis as she held Marian's heavy coat for her. "Has your father sent you any more new ones?" she asked teasingly.

"No," said Marian, biting her lip, though her

eyes twinkled. "He promised to bring me something when he comes, though—I wish he'd hurry."

"You're a spoiled child," said Julia, pulling Marian's curls out from under her coat collar. "You ought to stay here with me and Lucy and get used to things—like the boy in 'Captains Courageous.'"

"Learn to be untidy and leave doors open and forget to wash the ink off your hands, like me," said Lucy, laughing.

"I could teach you to rush at things, and then wish you hadn't. That's what I'm best at," said Julia, entering into the joke.

"All the same, I wish you were going to stay until next summer, and perhaps you can," said Lucy, tugging at her overshoes.

"I'll come back, you know, Lucy, any time you ask me," declared Marian, grown serious.

"Oh, I'll ask you now—for three hundred and sixty-five days in the year," said Lucy promptly. "Come on, Marian, I'm roasting in these things."

Back at their own house, Lucy heard voices from her father's study and stopped for a second, puzzled. But Marian, behind her, at the first sound of that voice was in doubt no longer. With a wild rush she flung the door wide open and ran into the room.

"Father! I knew it!" she cried, in a burst of

overwhelming delight, and as Mr. Leslie sprang from his chair she flung her arms about his neck.

" Why, Marian, it's really you—safe and sound," he said, joyfully hugging her, and he pulled the tam from her tumbled hair and looked long into her smiling happy face.

CHAPTER XV

ONE CHANCE OUT OF FIFTY

Before Mr. Leslie went to bed that night he had heard all the Gordons could tell him about Bob, and of the fear that lay heavy at their hearts, even since the coming of Elizabeth's message. No one could resist the power of Mr. Leslie's generous and overflowing sympathy. He could not put into words his sorrow and deep concern at Bob's misfortune, but his face, as responsive to his thoughts as Marian's own, showed all he felt, and the Gordons spoke to him as they had spoken to no one else.

All his happiness in Marian's improvement did not lift the shadow from his mood that night, even while he talked hopefully, describing the vast shipbuilding scheme which might bring the war to an earlier end than now seemed possible. But here Major Gordon was too well up in facts and figures to be deceived, and he could not be comforted by false hopes.

"A year at the least, Henry. You know it as well as I. Our first draft is not yet fit for service,

and a strong army from this side is needed to force a decision."

Mr. Leslie attempted no contradiction, but after a moment's pause, he said, "Nevertheless, the control of the seas by our merchant fleet will be a triumph. Think what it would mean to defeat the submarine blockade of England."

"You place your hopes on the sea," declared Major Gordon. "Good transportation is indispensable, and worth straining every nerve to gain, but it cannot do everything. The war must be won on land; mile by mile and man by man until the enemy is broken."

"I think you take the brave part of a soldier in preparing for the worst," Mr. Leslie persisted. "I still look for some unforeseen event which will fight for us, as Russia's unfortunate confusion fought for Germany."

"Well, I haven't much imagination," remarked Major Gordon soberly. "I'll be precious glad to see it, though, if it comes."

Marian was almost asleep by her father's chair, her heavy eyelids drooping for the past ten minutes in spite of every effort, and Lucy, though her ears were open to every word, was beginning to blink herself.

"You children must go to bed," said Mrs. Gordon, rousing herself from her thoughts. "It always

makes you sleepy to be out in the cold. Go ahead, Lucy."

Marian demurred a little, but she rose in a moment and bade her father an affectionate good-night. It was easy to see how glad these two were to be together again, in spite of all Mr. Leslie's preoccupation at the Gordons' trouble. He looked with a smile of the keenest satisfaction after Marian now, as the two girls went out of the room, leaving their elders together.

Nobody was sleepier than Marian when she was really tired, and she said no more than to murmur a vague content at her father's arrival while she and Lucy got ready for bed. Lucy was not anxious to talk, for her thoughts were busy with the conversation she had just heard between her father and Mr. Leslie, but, ponder it as she would, it did not contain much hope or encouragement for the near future. She tried to find comfort in Mr. Leslie's words, but the momentary cheerfulness she summoned died away before the hard truths of the war's endless persistence and Bob's imprisonment. Tossed to and fro between unanswerable questions, as she listened to the murmur of voices below, at last she fell asleep.

Before the sun was fairly up next morning, and while she was only half awake, Lucy heard footsteps at her bedside. She turned over and, to her sur-

prise, saw Marian, wrapped in a blue kimono, with her curly bright hair loose about her smiling face.

"Are you wondering what on earth got me up at this hour?" she asked at Lucy's look of astonishment. "I couldn't sleep any longer, thinking of Father's being here. Won't you get up, Lucy, so we can take him for a walk around the post before school? He always gets up early, and Margaret will give us some breakfast."

"Very well," said Lucy, amused. She sat up and stretched her arms above her head, not very rested after her long, uneasy thoughts of the night before. "What a lovely day!" she exclaimed, turning toward the window, through which the rising sun was streaming. "We'll take Cousin Henry out on the sea-wall and inside the fort."

The girls dressed quickly, but Mr. Leslie, true to Marian's words, was down-stairs almost as soon as they were.

"We're going to take you for a walk," said Lucy, smiling at his cheerful morning greeting. "But we'll have something to eat first, shan't we? Because Marian is such a walker now, there's no knowing when we'll get back."

Mr. Leslie expressed himself heartily as being willing to go anywhere and see anything, and the breakfast which Margaret sent up did not long delay them.

It was a clear, cold morning, and all three, once outdoors, started off at a brisk walk, and crossed the parade toward the new land beyond Brick Row, where already companies were forming for drill.

Mr. Leslie could not keep his eyes from Marian, even to look at all the things she pointed out. The vigor of her movements and the lively interest which she called on him to share were alike incredible to him. The delicate, fretful little daughter he had left behind, with such qualms for her safety, had become a lovely, bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked girl. She laughed at the delight in his face as she said:

"You're surprised, aren't you, Father, to see me so fat and strong? You know, I'm surprised myself. It's all Lucy's fault—you must ask her all the things she made me do."

Marian turned a bright, friendly glance on her cousin, who answered, undisturbed, "I didn't treat her very badly, Cousin Henry. Does she look as if I had?"

"Oh, Father," Marian interrupted, serious now, "she had the most awful time with me! I know it, Lucy, so there's no use in your laughing. I wouldn't go out or do anything she or Cousin Sally wanted. I sat and moped until they almost gave me up as a bad job. But Lucy just decided it would be doing her bit, I guess, to make me act like

other people, because she kept on, and the first thing I knew I began to like going around with other girls myself."

Marian had never expressed herself like this before, and Lucy, pleased in her heart at having her hard efforts appreciated, thought with surprise, as she had already done more than once, that Marian was keener than any one gave her credit for.

"Lucy, I suppose you don't wish me to thank you," began Mr. Leslie, speaking so much more in earnest than Lucy had expected that she exclaimed hastily:

"Oh, mercy, no, Cousin Henry! What on earth for? We must turn off across the grass here, if you want to walk on the sea-wall. If we go out there first the men will all be at drill when we get back, and then we can go inside the fort."

Mr. Leslie watched Lucy's face as she spoke, with a sudden, sharp contraction of his kind heart. The fresh color in her cheeks, which he had once envied for Marian, had paled during the last few weeks. The twinkling, hazel eyes, which he remembered so full of life and merriment were serious and sad as she raised them to his, and in every look and gesture he saw and understood the weight of anxiety that pressed upon her. She was cheerful enough, and most people might have seen little difference, but Mr. Leslie had observing eyes.

"Poor little girl," he thought pityingly. "Poor old Bob, too,—hard luck."

"Father, you aren't looking at anything," said Marian reproachfully. "Here's the aviation field—see it? We get to the sea-wall right here. It's not quite so cold to-day, do you think so, Lucy?"

"Not while we're in the sun. We come out here in all sorts of weather, Cousin Henry, and sometimes Marian feels as though life on Governor's Island were a sort of Arctic Expedition."

"Except that she got back from it in fairly good shape," said Mr. Leslie, throwing back his head to laugh in a jolly way he had. "I can believe it took a good bit of coaxing to get her out here at first."

"You bet it did," agreed Marian, shivering reminiscently. "It does still, when the wind blows. We came out here once when Julia had to hold her puppy for fear he'd be blown off, and I rebelled and said I wouldn't stay."

"Yes, we didn't always have our own way with her," said Lucy. "She has been bossing me herself a good deal lately, though," she added, with a grateful remembrance of Marian's thoughtfulness during the past weeks, as she looked out over the blue waters of the harbor.

It was quarter to nine by the time they had come in from the sea-wall and crossed the island, past the companies at drill, to old Fort Jay, where they

entered the sally-port in the ramparts, while Mr. Leslie inspected the barracks and quadrangle. Marian, who was decidedly more punctual than Lucy, hurried their steps to get back to the Matthews' in time for school.

"Are you going to New York, Father?" she asked. Mr. Leslie's plans were as yet unsettled, and his stay at the post uncertain. Marian was anxious to learn what he intended to do as soon as possible.

"Yes, I must go over some time this morning. I can't tell whether another trip West this month is necessary until I have seen a fellow from the shipping board, who has come up from Washington."

"Well, promise to come back for dinner," begged Marian, as they neared the Gordons' house.

"Yes, I promise. But I probably shall be gone all day. Here's your father, Lucy, wondering where we have flown to."

Major Gordon was standing on the steps, cap in hand, as they came up, and he exclaimed in surprise at their early start, glancing at the watch on his wrist. "I thought you'd taken the girls off to play hooky, Henry. I was almost starting after you."

"We're not late," said Lucy, running up the steps. "I'll get our books, Marian, and come right out. There's Julia crossing from her house now."

"Good-bye; don't stay long," Marian called back to her father when she and Lucy started off.

Lucy liked school better lately than she ever had before, because it occupied her mind and kept it from straying into what were often unhappy directions. The hours the four girls spent with Miss Ellis were very pleasant ones, and the mornings usually ended soon enough for everybody. Lucy did object to the Latin days, for it took her a whole hour of the afternoon before to prepare her lesson. To-day Miss Ellis gave out a whole page of sentences, and Lucy said emphatically to Julia, as the girls were walking home:

"You have simply got to come over after lunch and help me with that Latin. I'll show you about the arm-bandaging for next week, if you will."

Julia was willing to do almost anything for her friend these days, and she answered, glad of the opportunity, "Of course I'll help you. We'll do it together. I can come over early."

Languages were Julia's strong point. She could speak French almost as well as Marian, and when the three girls got together that afternoon the lesson did not take long. As Marian folded up her paper she said thoughtfully:

"I suppose you've always gone to school and had to do your lessons. It's funny. I thought you worked dreadfully hard when I began studying here

in September. I kept on only because I was ashamed not to be able to do as much as the rest of you."

"Why, you've always had a governess, Marian, haven't you?" asked Lucy, surprised.

"Oh, yes. But she didn't dare make me work hard. Once she did and I got sick and scared her and Father almost to death. It was at Lucerne, two years ago, and the whole rest of the year I just fooled along. If she tried to begin real lessons I looked doubtful about it and she gave right in."

"That was easy," said Julia, laughing. "I wish I'd been brought up that way. But you seem to know a good deal, in spite of it."

"That's just from traveling and reading, or what Father has told me." Marian called this back from her own room, where she had gone to take off her school dress. "I never really worked at anything unless I wanted to."

"You're not so awfully spoiled, considering," said Lucy, leaning back in her chair and watching Marian lazily, as she came in, slipping over her head the dress she had brought from her room.

"Have I seen that one? I don't think so," said Julia, turning to look with critical interest at the plaid serge that Marian had changed to. "Clothes may come and clothes may go, but yours go on

forever," she remarked, putting down her pen. "Come here, Marian, and I'll fasten it for you."

"I suppose I'd better put on something decent, too, before Cousin Henry gets back," said Lucy, looking with disfavor at her tan shoes, which were decidedly in want of a polish. "You seem to dress by clockwork, Marian. It's always a wrench for me to remember it."

Marian laughed, rising from the arm of Julia's chair to stand before Lucy's glass to straighten her collar and arrange the ribbons on her hair.

"Still, it's easier for you to look neat, having that sort of hair that curls right around where it belongs," Lucy went on. "Mine goes in every direction it shouldn't." She gave a vigorous tug to her hair-ribbon, and pulled her soft, fair hair down about her shoulders.

"Well, I can't wait while you fix all that," said Julia, getting up and collecting her book and papers. "I promised to help Mother at the Red Cross."

"I'll go over with you," said Marian quickly; "I'm all dressed and I'd like to."

"All right—fine," said Julia, as Marian went into her room for her coat and hat.

Lucy went to the stairs with them and called good-bye over the banisters; then she returned to change her shoes and dress and put up her hair.

None of this took her long, and in fifteen minutes she was ready and stood undecided by her closet door, wondering whether or not to go out and join the others. She heard the door open down-stairs and footsteps below, and had made up her mind to go down and find her mother, if she had come home, when some one knocked sharply at her door.

"Come in," she said, thinking it was Marie, but to her surprise Mr. Leslie's voice said, as he opened the door, "Hello, Lucy! May I come and see you?"

"Of course, Cousin Henry! When did you get back?" said Lucy, going to meet him with a smile of welcome. "Is every one out? I was just coming down."

"Your mother is at home. She has some visitors down-stairs. But I want to talk to you a few minutes, if you've no objections."

"Not a bit," said Lucy, rather mystified, as she drew forward a chair for Mr. Leslie and sank down herself on her little sofa.

Mr. Leslie's cheeks were still ruddy from the cold air, and he rubbed his hands together a second before he began, with a quick glance at Lucy's wondering face:

"When I tried to tell you the other day how grateful I felt for what you have done for Marian you changed the subject as soon as possible. I

didn't blame you," he added with a sudden smile. "It isn't much fun being thanked. You'd rather I'd feel it and keep it to myself."

"Oh—honestly, I didn't do much," stammered Lucy, blushing and acutely uncomfortable. She liked to be appreciated as much as any one, but this was going rather far.

"You did just this," Mr. Leslie persisted. "You brought back Marian's health—the one thing in the world I wanted that I hadn't it in my power to get." The keen, blue eyes were shining as he looked intently into Lucy's shy and troubled face. "Whatever you say, Lucy, you have done me a service that I can never forget as long as I live, and gratitude would be an empty boast if I didn't want to do you a favor in return. I know there is only one thing in the world you want just now." Lucy looked at him, startled beyond all embarrassment, as he went on, "I can't tell whether that thing is within my power to give you—I won't know for many long days—but I am going to do my best. I have good friends in Switzerland, at our Embassy at Berne. I am going to cross this week and see what they can do toward having Bob exchanged."

Lucy sprang from the sofa to kneel by Mr. Leslie's chair and look into his face. "Oh, Cousin Henry—do you m-mean it?" she faltered, her

throat painfully choking and her sight dimmed by the tears that filled and overflowed her eyes.

"It isn't likely I'd say it if I didn't," responded Mr. Leslie's big reassuring voice, as he patted his little cousin's shoulder with a tender hand. "I don't say I shall succeed, Lucy—but I'm going to try."

"But what will you do, Cousin Henry? What *can* you do, if the Germans don't want to let him go?" cried Lucy, the sudden radiance of her hope dying down at thought of the real obstacles in the way of Bob's release. She dashed the tears from her eyes to look eagerly into Mr. Leslie's face for signs of confidence in his undertaking.

His face, though, was more determined than confident as he answered, "It isn't exactly a favor we shall ask of Germany. Exchanges are of mutual benefit, for in Bob's place a German prisoner, whom some one over there is anxious to see released, will be restored to his friends. This is done all the time, as you know, but it is subject, of course, to certain conditions." The principal one of the conditions he had in mind was that the prisoner to be exchanged must be badly wounded, but he did not mention this just then. Mr. Leslie was not so foolishly optimistic as to be blind to the difficulties in his way, but he considered a reasonable hope as ground enough on which to proceed.

"The way these exchanges are managed," he went on, "is through the mediation of our minister in Switzerland with the diplomat who has charge of our affairs in Berlin. In this way Ambassador Gerard, who had charge of British affairs in Germany from the outbreak of the war, obtained the release of many British prisoners, or, when this was impossible, at least managed to better their condition. The Spanish Ambassador, who looks after the United States now in Germany, is my very old friend, whose house we rented in Cadiz, the winter Marian's mother died. I know he will do his best for me—though what that best amounts to only time can tell. But it's enough to cheer up a little on—isn't it, Lucy?"

"Oh, yes, it is, Cousin Henry!" cried Lucy, with light in her eyes and a new life in her voice as she stood up by Mr. Leslie's side. "Do Father and Mother know?"

"Your father does. He's coming in now," said Mr. Leslie, looking from the window. "I'll go down and speak to him and to your mother, if those people have gone."

"I'm coming, too," exclaimed Lucy, wiping her eyes and tucking back her hair, after a hasty glance in the mirror. "I know all about it, so I may hear what you say to them, mayn't I?"

"I don't see why not," said Mr. Leslie cheer-

fully, as he led the way down-stairs to the study, where Major and Mrs. Gordon were looking over the afternoon mail.

The talk which followed was a long one, and Lucy's joy was tempered by a few troubled and remorseful moments. Mrs. Gordon, overcome with gratitude as Lucy had been, still found thought for Marian, and hesitated to permit the journey Mr. Leslie meant to undertake in their behalf. Major Gordon, too, looking anxious and care-worn, made an attempt to dissuade him.

"It's one chance out of fifty that you'll succeed, Henry," he said soberly, "and the risk to yourself amounts to something. It's more than we can reasonably ask of you."

"You didn't ask it," responded Mr. Leslie, calmly. "I told Lucy I intended doing something for her, to repay what she has done for my little girl, and I mean to stick to it. I saw about my passports to-day."

Lucy was sitting on the floor by her mother's side, and at this she felt the unruly tears rising again to her eyes, as she leaned against her mother's knee while Mrs. Gordon's arm stole about her shoulders.

"More than that," Mr. Leslie continued, "I'm doing it for my own satisfaction. Having friends whose help will give me a reasonable chance of success I can't rest content without an effort to get

Bob out. Maybe I'll only be able to find out where he is and open communication with him. That will at least be something. I've known and loved the boy for twenty years. He certainly deserves this much from me."

Lucy's eyes met his, as he spoke these earnest words, with instant and heartfelt understanding. She knew what Mr. Leslie meant when he said he could not rest without doing his utmost to win Bob's freedom. That longing, helpless on her part, to do something—even the least thing—in Bob's behalf, had been with her many days, and she keenly understood Mr. Leslie's restless discontent, and guessed at his eager desire to get nearer by three thousand miles to Bob's prison, and strike a blow at the battle-front itself toward his release.

Before any one had time to say more, Marian came in, returning from the Red Cross. Mr. Leslie rose and went to meet her.

"I want to talk to you, Marian—just for a minute," he said. "Let's go up to your room."

Up-stairs he unfolded his plan, making it sound as hopeful and promising as he could, nor dwelling on any possible danger to himself, but if he had looked for a scene at the news of his departure he was agreeably disappointed. Marian did cry, "Oh, Father, you're not going over—now!" and tears of disappointment shone in her eyes, but she sat down

and listened quietly to what he said, and did not refuse to understand.

She was not by any means indifferent to Bob's misfortune, and her sympathetic nature made her share of the Gordons' trouble a very real one. Bob's jolly, friendly presence had won her instant liking, in the few days she had known him, and the thought of what her father's going might achieve for him made the parting far easier to bear. As for the dangers of the voyage, once Mr. Leslie had pooh-poohed the idea and promised that his absence should be a short one, Marian ceased to fear. She had the most unbounded confidence in her father's word, and she had often seen him go great distances in safety, and had accompanied him half-way around the world herself.

This was not the only talk that occurred in the three days which followed. Many were the plans discussed, suggestions offered and apprehensions felt by the different members of the family. But Mr. Leslie had nothing but cheerful words, now that his course was definitely settled, and his happiness in Marian's recovery was heightened by the hope and comfort he saw he had brought to Lucy's heart. He stuck to his original plan and sailed from " an American port " on Christmas Eve.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FLYING MAN

MARIAN missed her father, and felt keenly the disappointment of losing him so soon again, but she looked eagerly forward, with the Gordons, to the success of his mission. Christmas week passed slowly, but on New Year's Day came the welcome news by cable of his arrival on the other side. It was a New Year's greeting that meant more than any good wishes could to those who received it; the knowledge that Mr. Leslie had safely started on his difficult undertaking.

Lucy and Marian had been kept busy during the holidays, for Miss Thomas gave her class three lessons a week during that time, and her pupils had learned enough now to be really interested. She lost no opportunity to make them feel the real importance of their work.

"You don't know how useful you may be before the war is over," she told the girls one day just after the new year. "Every one who can do the least thing well is needed now. The smallest help is that much done, which is not left for some one else to do. Experienced nurses are scarce already, and will be

fewer still. Even to know how to keep oneself in good health is worth much. Some of you, young as you are, I feel confident could be of very real help if you were called upon. There is work to be done among children in our hospitals, for instance, for which trained nurses cannot always be spared. Some of you are nearly old enough for such work, if the time comes. Among the younger ones, Lucy Gordon strikes me as a very promising little nurse."

She smiled in Lucy's direction, with a pleasant, direct way she had of giving praise wherever it was due. This was the first time she had picked out Lucy, who was rather overcome for a moment, though tremendously pleased nevertheless. She could not resist a triumphant glance at Julia, which that good-natured young person returned with a broad grin of comprehension.

"Good for you, Lucy! We'll be proud of you yet," whispered Anne. "Perhaps taking care of Marian was good practice for you," she added slyly, for Lucy's energetic perseverance with Marian had often aroused her amusement.

"Yes, she was my first attempt," said Lucy, smiling. "She lived through it, anyhow. Come on, we're going down now."

Miss Thomas was distributing gauze and muslin bandaging for the first-aid demonstration which followed the nursing class.

Lucy was so encouraged by her teacher's praise that she felt equal to anything. She wrapped the bandage about Julia's supposedly injured collar-bone with cheerful ardor, until Julia, cautiously wriggling her shoulder, remarked, "I wish she'd waited until we got through to tell you that. I think you've stopped the circulation. Loosen it up a little."

Lucy burst out laughing, and undid the bandage to suit her exacting patient. "It's you who deserve all the credit," she said candidly. "Any one would have to be a good nurse who had you to fix. Marian lets me tie her up in knots and just grins and bears it until I let her out."

"Well, it's easier sometimes than arguing with you," declared Julia, stretching her arm again with a sigh of relief. "I still think I was right about that sunstroke."

At the last lesson Lucy and Julia had had a hot discussion as to whether the sunstruck person's head should be raised or lowered, which ended in Lucy's spilling all the ice for her patient's head compress over Julia's face as she lay on the sofa. Even after that Lucy refused to give in, and the book, by an annoying confusion of terms, seemed to give neither side satisfaction.

Lucy smiled at the remembrance. There had lots of funny things happened during the course,

though such hard and effective work lay behind them, and Lucy thanked Miss Thomas sincerely in her heart for the hours of distraction from worry that the lessons had brought.

It was a lovely clear day, and after luncheon Lucy offered to take William out on his sled, feeling like having a little strenuous exercise. William seemed quite willing to help her get it, for he asked:

"Do you mind pulling Happy, too, Lucy? He gets awfully deep in the snow if he has to walk."

"How about me?" Lucy demanded. "All right, I'll see how heavy you are."

She selected the parade, which had been firmly packed down by the marching men, and drew William and Happy past Colonel's Row and across it. Then, as they came to Brick Row, the sparkling water tempting her, she pulled the sled over the new land toward the sea-wall, a hard tug of half a mile that made her sink down by William's side as they neared the water, with hot cheeks and panting breath.

"Gracious, what a pair of fat lazybones!" she exclaimed, looking at her passengers with unconcealed scorn. "Why don't you get out and stretch your legs? That puppy needs some exercise."

"All right," agreed William, peaceably. "You said you wanted to pull me. Happy would rather

walk, anyway," he added in defense of his pet, whom he had been holding on the sled with great difficulty all the way over.

"It's lovely out here in the sun," said Lucy, calming down.

An airplane had risen from the aviation field on their left and was flying at a leisurely rate in their direction. William leaned back on the sled to watch it as it flew over them and on toward Fort Jay. "I guess he's cold," he remarked. "That's what makes him go so slowly."

"Isn't the water pretty, William?" asked Lucy, looking toward the sea-wall, a hundred yards distant.

"Yes. He's coming back now," said William, still watching the aviator, who had circled about Fort Jay and was flying low over the parade at the edge of the new land, seeming to avoid the parade itself, where a few companies were marching out to drill.

Lucy turned from the water to follow the airplane's flight as it swooped down, barely a hundred feet above the earth, its white wings gleaming in the sunlight against the bright blue sky. Suddenly she stiffened. "Why, he's going to land, I do believe, and I think he'll come down on top of us!"

She seized the sled rope and pulled William and Happy off nearer to the sea-wall, while above them

the airplane descended in a series of crooked dives to the ground. She could see the aviator pulling madly at his steering gear, as with a final glide the machine came to earth about two hundred yards from the sea-wall.

"Hoo-h!" breathed William, jumping up and down in his excitement.

The pilot stepped out with deliberation, and at sight of his slow walk Lucy recognized him, though his uniform was almost covered by a big sheepskin coat. It was the French aviator, Captain Jourdin, who, though discharged from active service for wounds, had taught since the declaration of war in the American Aviation Schools. He was a familiar figure on Governor's Island, where he spent a part of the time he divided among half a dozen places. His ankle was held in an iron brace, and he limped heavily in walking, but his general activity was not much impaired in spite of it. As he approached the children now, his keen dark eyes were fixed on them with a touch of anxiety.

"I beg a thousand pardons," were his first words as he neared the sled from which Lucy came forward to meet him. "I frightened you, I fear?" He looked from Lucy's face to William's for signs of alarm, while Lucy answered:

"Oh, no, you didn't—honestly. I got out of the way because I wasn't sure where you were coming

"I DID NOT KNOW WHERE I SHOULD LAND"

down." She had never seen the famous young veteran so near before, and she scanned his face with eager interest.

"I did not know where I should land myself," he declared, shaking his head and glancing at the airplane behind him. "It is an old one that they have repaired to use for practice flights. I took it out to see if it would do, but—it will not," he ended in a tone of conviction. "The steering gear was a bit too much for me." He gave a rueful look at his right hand, which he had wrenched in trying to bring the airplane safely to earth. It was already swollen about the wrist.

All Lucy's interest in nursing, fostered by what she had lately learned, sprang into life at sight of the ugly sprain. She was a little shy of the French officer, but she put aside her diffidence and spoke boldly.

"Please let me tie it up for you! I can keep it from swelling any more, and it would be half an hour before you could get to the hospital."

The Frenchman shook his head with a smile, as though about to refuse, but perhaps the eager look in Lucy's face changed his mind. His smile broadened, and he held out his injured hand, saying, "Many thanks, Miss. You are more than kind. May I sit down on the little brother's sled?"

William nodded vigorously, not finding words to

reply, and the aviator seated himself, stretching his stiff leg out in front of him.

Lucy's thoughts had not been a second idle. "Elevate the joint if possible and apply heat or cold. Cold may be applied in the form of snow or crushed ice in a cloth." Nothing could be easier to follow than those directions. She took a clean handkerchief from her coat pocket, but at sight of it Captain Jourdin dived with his left hand inside his coat and produced his own.

"This is a trifle larger," he suggested, handing it to Lucy with a twinkle in his eyes.

Lucy was too much in earnest to give more than a nod in return. She took her own handkerchief and filled it with clean snow, scraped from below the surface. Then laying the cold compress carefully about the officer's swollen wrist, she fastened it firmly in place with his handkerchief. The result had a bulky look, but it gave the aching wrist a good deal of comfort, for her patient's voice sounded sincere when he exclaimed:

"That's good! That was just the right thing for it. You seem to be a very wise young lady." He smiled at her as he fingered the snow bandage critically. "Might I ask your name?" he added, as Lucy, feeling shy again after her bold attempt at assistance, flicked the snow from her bare hands with her glove.

"Lucy Gordon," she said, looking up at this; "and my brother's name is William."

"So is mine," declared the Frenchman, with a friendly glance in William's direction, "only I don't say it quite that way. Your father is an officer on the post?" he inquired.

"Yes; a major on the staff," explained Lucy; then, feeling expansive in the presence of a listener who could so well understand her, she added, "My older brother is an aviator. He went to France in the summer and now he is a prisoner in Germany."

"No! A prisoner?" was the quick and sympathetic response, as the dark eyes lighted up with a look of keen interest. "Ah, that is hard!" he said softly; "but your brother did his best for his country, and still his life is spared. We can only hope that soon the war may be won, and our friends come back to us."

Lucy nodded, her eyes sad and wistful for a moment as she said, "He loved flying. He came from West Point only last August, but he was transferred to the Aviation Corps right away. Look, Captain Jourdin—they must be coming after you."

A little group of men had started over from the aviation field, evidently to find out the cause of the aviator's protracted stop, and at sight of them Cap-

tain Jourdin rose at once to his feet, signaling with his left arm to reassure them.

"I shall need a mechanic before that machine rises again," he remarked, "so I must go forward and explain to Captain Brent." He turned back to Lucy and held out his unbandaged hand. "You will excuse me," he said, smiling, "if I do not offer you the other. Good-bye and many thanks, Miss Lucie. I shall hope to meet that brother of yours, the aviator, before many long months. My very good wishes for his near and safe return." He held up his bandaged wrist, adding, "It is you I have to thank that this is no longer painful."

"I'm so glad," faltered Lucy, longing, as she shook hands, to ask more about Bob, and what chance Mr. Leslie might have of success.

The Frenchman gave a friendly salute to William, who returned it promptly with his red-mittened paw, and limped slowly off over the snow to meet the advancing officer.

"I wonder if he could have told me anything," Lucy asked herself, wishing she had got up courage to question him further while she had time. "He's had no end of adventures since the war began. Perhaps he's been in a German prison, too."

"Come on, Lucy, let's go. What are you standing there for?" demanded William, stamping his cold feet and looking impatiently at his sister, who

seemed lost in watching the departing Frenchman.

"I wonder what he's been through since 1914," Lucy murmured; then, turning back to William and the sled, she picked up the rope, saying, "All right, come on. Suppose you walk until you get warm and then I'll pull you the rest of the way. Happy can do whichever he likes."

"He'd rather walk until I get on," said William, starting along. "Let's stop and look at the airplane first. It can't fly, you know."

All the way home Lucy was preoccupied, thinking of her hurried first-aid dressing, and of whether she had really helped the sprain, then forgetting that, to wish again that she had tried to learn something of Bob's probable whereabouts and chances of liberty.

"If only I may see him again, I'll ask him," she thought, but not very hopefully, for the foreign instructors remained principally on the aviation field, and the officers' children were seldom allowed there.

Lucy could hardly wait, when she got home, to tell her mother and Marian all about it, though she stopped in the middle of her story to look up sprains in her tattered first-aid manual, to see if she had forgotten anything that could have been carried out on the spot. Relieved about that she went on talk-

ing, and as she described the French aviator Mrs. Gordon said:

"That's the man Captain Brent speaks so much of. He can't say enough in his praise. He was telling your father the other night about some of his wonderful exploits."

"Oh, I wish I might hear about them! I'll ask Captain Brent," exclaimed Lucy, eagerly.

"That's what I get for staying at home," remarked Marian, who was sitting beside Mrs. Gordon's sewing-table, absently twisting a curl about her finger. "Of course you had to have an adventure, Lucy, when I wasn't there. Interesting things always seem to happen on the coldest days."

"It was my fault this time," said Mrs. Gordon. "I didn't want you to go out again in the cold." She looked at Marian's pretty, regretful face with a smile that had behind it a clear, searching glance. She had feared that Mr. Leslie's departure might prove a trying disappointment, and lead Marian to mope again, but though it was evident that she missed her father, and that he was constantly in her thoughts, Marian's health was now too firmly reestablished to suffer seriously. Her father's delight, too, at the change in her, was enough to keep up her interest in her own improvement. Mrs. Gordon looked with satisfaction at the worn skirt of Marian's serge dress, where she had knelt on

William's sled, and had crawled over the floor while following Miss Thomas' directions in regard to escaping from a burning house. Her dresses never had known such marks before, but had been given away as good as new at the end of the season. Mrs. Gordon welcomed, in Marian's case, a few of the tears and worn places with which her own children furnished her almost too plentifully.

"I'm going to change it in a minute, Cousin Sally," said Marian, following Mrs. Gordon's glance to her knees. "But I think I'll go and write to Father first; though, from what he said about his address," she added doubtfully, "it's about as definite as writing to Santa Claus."

"Not quite so bad as that," said Mrs. Gordon, smiling, "because he'll get your letters—sooner or later." She was serious again before she finished speaking, and Lucy, guessing her thoughts, knew that she was longing for the day when word from Bob should come, and messages from home could at least reach his prison.

Unable to offer any encouragement worth hearing, Lucy rose from the floor with a smothered sigh, saying, "I need to dress, too. Come on, Marian. That pesky hair of yours looks just as nice as it did at breakfast."

In the evening, to Lucy's delight, Captain Brent came to call, anxious to hear about the progress of

Mr. Leslie's journey in Bob's behalf. Lucy could scarcely wait for a chance to ask him about Captain Jourdin.

When the opportunity came she demanded, breathlessly, "Was he badly wounded? Did he do wonderful things first, Captain Brent? Was he ever taken prisoner?"

"One at a time, Captain Lucy," said the officer, laughing. "I know why you're so interested, though. He told me about the excellent treatment his sprained wrist received as soon as the beastly machine came down. I asked who tied it up for him, as he evidently couldn't have done it alone, and he said he had no idea American girls were so accomplished."

"But what did the doctor say who saw the bandage?" inquired Major Gordon, amused.

"I don't know, but it looked pretty good to me. The swelling didn't get any worse, which was what Jourdin wanted," declared Captain Brent, leaning down to play with Happy, who was growling at one of his boots.

"Won't you tell some of the things he's done?" begged Lucy, afraid it would be bedtime before she heard anything.

"Why, it would take a week to tell all of them," said Captain Brent, straightening up again and speaking thoughtfully. "I heard about his service

in France from a British officer who was over on Long Island last month. Jourdin would never tell anything. He thinks he made a mess of things—getting out of the fight so early."

"How long was he in the war?" asked Mrs. Gordon.

"Two years, just about. The information he brought back from the German lines was instrumental in winning the Battle of the Somme, according to this Englishman. There is nothing Jourdin would not undertake to do, if the object were worth gaining. His last flight before his discharge was made over enemy territory after he received two bullets in his leg and another through the shoulder. He wouldn't go back until he learned what he was told to find out. But the bones of his ankle were injured beyond repair."

"Was he ever taken prisoner?" Lucy could not help repeating.

"No, never—though he had several narrow escapes when he was forced to go down behind the German lines. His brother, an infantry colonel, is in a German prison now."

"Does he hear from him? Can he get letters?" Lucy questioned eagerly.

"I don't know. I'll ask him if you like. We've never got on that subject."

Lucy's knitting had fallen, forgotten, at her feet,

and only Happy's excitement as he grabbed the ball and rolled over on it made her stoop to rescue the sock, while Marian snatched up the puppy from the tangle of yarn. Major Gordon had begun talking to Captain Brent, and Lucy felt she had asked her share of questions, but she longed to find out more about the Frenchman and obtain Captain Brent's promise to learn from him whatever he knew about German prisons. Captain Brent would be glad enough himself, she was sure, to learn something about Bob's fortunes, and he saw the aviator almost every day. However, just then she had to be patient, for Mrs. Gordon drew her attention to the clock, and she and Marian got up and said good-night.

"I wonder if your father has got to Switzerland yet, Marian, or if he has talked to any one about Bob," Lucy asked when they were up-stairs, as she had done nearly every evening since Mr. Leslie's arrival on the other side. She followed Marian into her room and watched her cousin with admiring eyes as she brushed out her golden curls and braided them into two pigtails for the night.

"I don't know, but we'll hear before very long," was Marian's sensible answer, which was not very satisfying to Lucy, though she nodded a faint agreement.

"I never could bear waiting," she remarked,

turning to go back to her own room. "Neither can Bob. We'd both rather do anything than expect things that don't happen."

"Perhaps you won't have to wait much longer. I can't help thinking that Father will send good news soon," said Marian, with a hopeful look that cheered Lucy in spite of herself. Marian put on a blue silk kimono and dived into the closet for her slippers while Lucy still stood uncertainly in the doorway.

"The only thing is," she muttered, frowning a little at the thought, "I know Father won't stay here much longer if we don't hear any news. Mother told me this morning that he intends asking for foreign service."

"But can he leave here?" asked Marian, astonished.

"He has one year more on this staff detail, but he thinks they will let him go. They are short of Q. M. officers on the other side. He will go when his detail ends, anyhow—if the war isn't over."

"But perhaps it will be," suggested Marian, looking like a cheerful little prophet wrapped in blue silk.

"Perhaps," said Lucy, smiling faintly at her. "Anyhow, I'd better go to bed."

CHAPTER XVII

OVER THE FRONTIER

Six weeks of imprisonment had brought few changes to Bob, and those few were not of a pleasant sort. The only bright spot in the dark monotony of his life was Sergeant Cameron's companionship, for repeated requests had finally obtained it for him, in a qualified degree. His captors had no objection to the sergeant's waiting on the American officer in place of a German orderly, so after the usual hesitation and delay, Sergeant Cameron was allowed to visit Bob and attend to his simple wants in the short periods during which the doors remained unlocked. Bob still shared Bertrand's room, and most of Sergeant Cameron's ministrations were by now directed, together with Bob's, to making the unfortunate officer as comfortable as possible. The two or three weeks which were to elapse before his transfer to better quarters had lengthened to five, and still the fever came and went, each time leaving the patient sufferer thinner, weaker, and less able to fight for his life. As Bob knelt beside his cot one cold, dark morning, with a bowl of coffee in his

hands, he turned a weary, anxious face to Sergeant Cameron, who was trying to blow the few sticks on the hearth into a lively blaze.

"It's no use, Sergeant," he said, sombrely. "I can't make him take anything. He won't be roused at all. Confound that doctor! He hasn't been near us in three days."

"He's off at another camp, sir, so I heard from the guard," said the sergeant, pausing in his work to look at Captain Bertrand's flushed and unconscious face as he lay heavily breathing. "I think he'll be along to-day. He has more to do than he can manage, but he seems a pretty good sort, for a Boche."

Bob gave a grunt of angry helplessness. "Then why doesn't he get this poor fellow moved? Can't he see that he's dying on his hands? I don't care if their hospitals are jammed with wounded—one Frenchman is worth a dozen of them!"

Bob spoke with a bitterness that was new to him, and his frowning brows did not unknit themselves as he rose from the floor, carefully drawing the blanket over Bertrand's shoulders. Sergeant Cameron finished mending the fire in thoughtful silence. The old soldier had suffered heavy disappointment in being captured and removed from the fighting line so early in the struggle, during a trifling raid on a bit of exposed German trench. Since then, too,

he had known hard privation in the prison camp, but at least half of the anxiety and depression that had paled his ruddy face was for the son of his old Major, whose every word and gesture showed the strain of indignation, hunger, and rigid confinement unwillingly borne. He could not do much to alleviate Bob's misery, but stories of Major Gordon's old regiment, which had been honored by an early place in the first line trenches, were always welcome to Bob's ears, and even a little talk would sometimes cheer him, for he was too young to be gloomy all the time.

"They say there's been a big British advance, Lieutenant," he began, rubbing his blackened fingers against each other as he turned from the hearth. "There's a new lot of prisoners come in early this morning. They're in the next barrack to me, so I'll have a word with them if possible at dinner-time."

"What did you hear? Where was the push made?" Bob asked, his eager interest smoothing out the wrinkles in his forehead and giving him back his boyish look. He was standing by the table, stirring a bit of bread in his bowl of acorn coffee.

"It was near a place the French call Cam-berray, or something like that," said the sergeant, diffidently. "The advance was led by General Byng. I got that much last night through a knot-hole in the

wall, from a Frenchman who's chummy with me and speaks a bit of English."

"Cambrai, I guess," exclaimed Bob, forgetting his breakfast as he stared into space with thoughtful eyes. "I wonder how much it means!"

"Don't know, sir, but I'll find out all I can," promised the sergeant, relieved to see the look of bitter depression gone for the moment from Bob's face. "They can't prevent the men talking together a good bit—we're so crowded up like, in our barrack."

The last two weeks had brought a crowd of French and British prisoners to the camp until it was filled to overflowing. But with every new arrival, rumor stole about that the Germans on the western front had paid a deadly price for each man captured, and that a far greater number of soldiers from the German lines were in the hands of the Allies.

But this was as much good news as Bob and Sergeant Cameron could summon to cheer them. No letters had reached them, nor any news that their own had been sent on. They might have been on a desert island for all the communication they could obtain with America. The little money Bob had hoarded was spent at last, and he suffered greatly from the monotonous and meagre diet. His repeated requests for advances of money from

the Commandant had met with no reply, and he had long since ceased to expect any.

Sergeant Cameron at first had put a cheerful interpretation on this indifference and neglect of the prisoners. "It's plain they are hard up, Lieutenant," he said hopefully, "for they can't spare us a word or a thought. They have to keep the war going at all costs."

"I think they just don't care what becomes of us," returned Bob, in one of his hopeless moments. He had nerved himself to endure his captivity bravely, but the everlasting monotony and privation were harder for his active nature to bear than the fiercest battle. A letter from home, telling him that they knew where he was and trusted to his pluck and endurance would have done wonders for him, but none took the trouble to forward a letter into the heart of Prussia, to a prisoner from the nation that Germany now hated even beyond her hate for England—because it had foiled her imagined victory.

However, no one who is in reasonable health and not suffering keenly can be miserable all day long. At any rate Bob could not, and the fits of brooding that worried Sergeant Cameron did not last more than an hour or two. After breakfast Bob went outside and took a walk along his wired-in alley in the not very cheerful company of a British colonel

who had recently been captured and couldn't get over the exasperating annoyance of being taken away just when he was most needed. He occupied Bob's old room and met his advances with friendliness, but had not recovered spirits enough to do more than talk about the beastly bad luck of his having managed to run right against that Boche patrol. Bob told him the rumors of General Byng's advance and awakened a spark of real interest in the Britisher, as well as another burst of anger at his own impotence.

"To think I might have been there!" exclaimed the captive colonel with longing eyes, a flush coming over his lean, weather-worn cheek. "We're out of luck, young fellow, and that's the truth—but I had some of it, at any rate."

"Yes," sighed Bob, vague thoughts of some desperate attempt at escape floating through his mind, to be impatiently dismissed at sight of the endless sentries patrolling their lengths of wire alleys. "A kangaroo with a machine gun might get away," he thought idly, "but I certainly can't."

The sun had not appeared for the past two days, hiding behind thick, gray clouds which gave a melancholy tone to the dreary winter landscape. Bob felt inclined to blame it as being a Prussian sun and unsympathetic to shivering young Americans whose fire-wood was not furnished in sufficient

quantities. But it peeped out, mistily, an hour later when Bob went back to Bertrand, hoping for a change in his comrade's heavy, feverish stupor. The sick man still lay with closed eyes, breathing fast and hard, but as Bob approached him, his lids flickered open and his bright eyes fixed themselves upon Bob's face.

"A little water, comrade," he murmured, the ghost of his old graciousness of manner lingering in his feeble voice.

Bob rejoiced at his words, his first sensible utterance in many hours, and hastened to obey his request. As he bent over the bed, raising the Frenchman's thin frame with one arm to hold the water to his hot lips, Bertrand whispered, "You have been a friend, *mon garçon,*—many thanks, while I have breath to say it!" He panted as he spoke, but his bright eyes turned to Bob's with a glance of affectionate gratitude, and their intelligence was for the moment unclouded. "If I must die in prison—in an enemy's country—it is something, comrade, to have your friendly face so near at hand. We are true Allies,—France and America."

He fell back gasping, while Bob, his own eyes blurred with quick tears of pity and understanding, dipped a handkerchief in the cold water and laid it over Bertrand's burning forehead.

"You're not going to die," he said, doggedly, though his voice was choked as he spoke and his grim face belied his hopeful words. "I'm going to get that doctor now, if I have to storm the Commandant in his own den." This he announced with a determination that took no thought as yet of ways and means.

He rose from beside the cot, where Bertrand lay exhausted after his battle for breath to speak with, and strode toward the door. Outside he could hear the prisoners marching toward the kitchen and the German guard was unlocking the officers' rooms for dinner. Bob waited for his own door to open, his purpose unwavering to demand attention for Bertrand's desperate need, no matter what retribution any violence might bring upon himself. He did not intend to wait for a word with Sergeant Cameron, but rapidly pieced together his German to address the guard as soon as the door opened. But when it did open, Bob's set face wavered almost to a smile with the quick relief of it. He would not have to engage just then, anxious and hungry as he was, on the doubtful struggle with the powers above him, for behind the guard stood the short, alert figure of the doctor, wrapped in a gray uniform overcoat, his face reddened by the frosty air.

Bob felt almost as though the German were a friend as he stepped eagerly forward, fearful lest

he should somehow escape him, saying, "Doctor, thank Heaven you've come! Captain Bertrand is very ill. Why haven't you had him taken away?"

The touch of indignation in his last words was acknowledged by the German with a slight shrug of the shoulders as he stepped inside the room and laid his medicine case on the table. "I cannot perform the impossible," he said shortly, giving a keen glance in Bertrand's direction. "He is not the only sick man in Germany."

Bob checked his resentment at this cool retort, and gave all his attention to helping the doctor make the sick man more comfortable. It was evident to both of them that there was little to be done, for the medicine case was not able to furnish the doctor with what he wanted, and Bertrand, sunk again into feverish slumber, gave no answer to the questions put to him. At last the German put on his gloves and prepared to take leave, but before doing so he forestalled Bob's obvious intention of protesting against Bertrand's remaining any longer in the prison by saying irritably:

"Yes, yes! He shall be moved. Soon, too—he has been here far too long already." He glanced at Bob with a look of angry dissatisfaction, whether at the young American himself, the sick man, or the German medical staff's mismanagement, Bob did not know; but after a curt nod he departed, leaving

Bob in a state of painful uncertainty during the few moments he passed alone with Bertrand before Sergeant Cameron brought in his meagre noonday meal.

Just what the doctor meant to do Bob was far from feeling sure, and Sergeant Cameron had little to say, after his five weeks' experience with German promises which lacked the merit of ever being performed.

At five o'clock that afternoon Bob heard the guard at his door, and rising from a dreary revery by Bertrand's side, he went to meet him. Sergeant Cameron was due with his supper and Bob was anxious for a word with him. Their patient was still just lingering on the borderland of unconsciousness. Sergeant Cameron was not yet there, but behind the guard came four soldiers, stretcher-bearers, who advanced stolidly into the little room with their unwieldy burden.

Bob's heart gave a sudden strange pang. The longed-for relief had come, but it was not so easy now to see his comrade of the long weeks just passed go out among strangers, too ill to wish him even a word of farewell. Almost dazed he stood aside, while the doctor followed in the stretcher-bearers' wake, and ordered the French officer lifted from the cot. Then Bob sprang forward and helped with gentle hands that shook a little as he adjusted

the blankets for the last time over his friend's thin shoulders. He said huskily to the doctor, "You'll do your best for him, won't you, Herr Doctor?"

The German gave a nod of assent, but said nothing more. He gave Bob an odd glance once or twice, and seemed more than ordinarily severe and constrained, giving the soldiers short, sharp orders which they made haste to obey. Bob said no more to him, and in another moment Bertrand had been carried out, and he was left alone.

He sat down, looking at the empty cot, and mumbled angrily to himself, in the midst of his black depression, "Don't be an ass. Buck up! What a slacker you are, anyway—can't you grin and bear it, as other fellows do?" And all the while he was wondering painfully at his own weakness, and despising it, yet utterly unable to rise above it, or to take his imprisonment courageously as only one of the many evil chances of war. When Sergeant Cameron came in at last he was still struggling with himself, and not even the sergeant's cheerful words of thankfulness that poor Bertrand was at last to be placed in competent hands—or so they hoped—could bring a ray of brightness to Bob's weary brain. He drank some of his bitter coffee and went to bed—free for the first time in weeks to sleep the night through without rising to see if Bertrand slept—but this night he lay awake

and wished for even the sick man's companionship.

When the first streaks of dawn stole through the little window Bob sat up and looked curiously at the ashes on the hearth. His fire was out—that was the curious part of it, because he was not cold, though the window pane was covered with frost and his breath puffed into vapor.

"I'm hot—hot as anything," he muttered, rubbing one hand over his aching forehead. "Funny, for I was cold enough all night." He lay down again to ponder it.

When Sergeant Cameron came with his breakfast Bob was still lying on the cot. The sergeant laid down the bowl of coffee and the armful of wood he carried to look keenly at the young officer's flushed cheeks, as he lay blanketless in the cold room. "Don't feel well, Lieutenant?" he faltered, trying to speak naturally, but reaching for Bob's hand as he spoke and starting at the burning dryness of it.

"Queer," said Bob, trying to emerge from the dim, feverish phantoms that obscured his thoughts, "but I'll be better after a while." He spoke more cheerfully than he had done the night before. All present worries had suddenly faded from his mind. He could not seem to think of anything but what was very vague and far away.

The next few days, during which Bob grew steadily worse, were hard almost beyond endurance to Sergeant Cameron's anxious and devoted spirit. He stayed tirelessly by Bob's bedside, until the German guards grew weary of ordering him away and let him be. Never did a sick man receive more faithful care or more earnest watching, and the doctor, at his rare visits, looked curiously more than once at the pale, unshaven, eager face of the old "non-com," as though he wondered at such persistent faithfulness.

Bob was not suffering just then. For the first time in many weeks he was free, and his hot aching body, lying on the narrow cot, did not much trouble the real self that was back again on the firing line, hovering over the German trenches in Benton's biplane, or swooping back to safety from pursuing guns. In quiet moments, when Sergeant Cameron fell into a doze by his bedside, Bob dreamed he was back in his barrack room at West Point, planning his graduation leave. Then Lucy's face would come before him and her voice sound in his ears. His mother's eyes would smile at him, with their old cheerfulness, and the war seemed very dreadful, but very dim and far away.

Once, after a long time during which he had lain still, not even dreaming, too weary and weak to do more than lie dully half-asleep, Bob opened his eyes

with a sudden clearing of his senses. Voices were close beside him, and he wanted to hear what they said, but he could not understand them. Then he realized they were speaking German, and felt a light-headed sort of joy at his own cleverness in discovering it. He looked up from the knees of the man who stood beside his cot, and found his face with a difficult, slow gaze. It was the doctor, and Bob's troubled eyes fell from his face, for it was stern and frowning. He met another glance, as a second man bent over him, and this face arrested his attention by its difference from the doctor's light hair and fair skin. The stranger had black smooth hair, dark, sparkling eyes, and an olive complexion. Bob could see his face plainly, for it was near him as the unknown bent over him from his short height. He wanted to ask, "Who are you?" but the effort seemed too great to make, and before he had summoned strength for it, the two had left his side and their boots were clumping off across the room.

Half an hour later, in the office of the Commandant, the secretary of the Spanish Embassy at Berlin urged his case strongly. He had an ally more powerful than his arguments in the fever itself, which was bringing a look of worn anxiety to the doctor's face. He had not time nor medicine enough for the few patients the camps now held, and the prospect of a wide-spread epidemic was

horrible to his harassed and order-loving soul. The conference was a short one, but the Spanish Secretary went back to Berlin with a signed recommendation for Bob's removal in his pocket, and a strong confidence that success awaited his Ambassador, in his friendly prosecution of Mr. Leslie's demand.

Of all this neither Sergeant Cameron nor Bob knew anything, but on the same day Bob's faithful nurse had cause for more tempered rejoicing. One of the lulls in the fever, during which Captain Bertrand had been used to go about with languid footsteps, came to Bob's relief. To his bodily relief, for his mind felt almost as though he would rather have stayed in the delirium when he awoke again to the dingy darkness of his prison. But for the time he was much better, and the joy on Sergeant Cameron's face told plainly what his desperate anxiety had been. Bob's stammered thanks were quite inadequate, but without words a new bond of friendship had been forged between the two, which they knew could never break.

Bob ate a little bread, soaked in water, and wondered at the weakness that would hardly let him lift his hand to feed himself. "I'm pretty worthless, aren't I?" he asked, with a faint smile, then, with a sudden recollection of his ministrations to poor Bertrand he added, "I wonder what they've done to Bertrand! How I'd like to know."

"You haven't had any letters from home, Sergeant? Nothing for me?" was another repeated question. The sergeant's reluctant denial cast Bob's spirits down heavily, but in spite of all he convalesced—only, as both he and Sergeant Cameron knew, he would succumb again as Bertrand had done unless his youth and health could fight more strongly for him.

"Funny dreams I had," he said one day to Sergeant Cameron, as he sat over his meagre breakfast. "I used to think I was at home, then I'd be fighting again—I never got back to prison, there was some comfort in that. One time I thought I saw a man here with the doctor—a stranger with dark hair and eyes. He looked so different from these Germans—not like a Frenchman either. I wonder what I was dreaming of?"

"Have a little of the bread, sir," suggested Sergeant Cameron. He was rather non-committal that morning. A new British prisoner had just whispered to him of General Byng's forced retreat from a part of his hard-won gains, and the old soldier was torn with longing to get back on to the field. "I might have done more if I'd stayed with the Major on Governor's Island," he thought bitterly, then remembering Bob's need with a quick rush of generosity he took back his own words.

But Bob was more fortunate in his illness than

he or Sergeant Cameron could guess. Before long it was made plain to them. A German officer visited Bob's room and told him with brief phrases in uncertain English of the negotiations for his exchange.

It was almost too much joy for one so weak and ill as Bob, and in the midst of his rejoicing his thoughts turned sadly to his faithful companion.

"Oh, Sergeant," he said the night the good news came, "I can't bear to have all the luck! It isn't fair."

"Never mind that, my lad," answered the brave old veteran, forgetting all titles of respect in the earnestness of the moment. "I'll do well enough here, but you'd not have stayed with me long. Thank God you can get out in time."

* * * * * * *

Ten days later, on a bright frosty morning, Mr. Leslie stood waiting at a little railway station on the Swiss frontier. He took little heed at first of the crowd around him, whose voices, high and low pitched, stern, anxious, hopeful or merry, as they spoke for busy government officials, Red Cross workers, or for the mothers, wives or children of returning prisoners, sounded in his ears. In a babel of French, German, Flemish and English they were giving voice to their impatient hopes and lingering fears, until Mr. Leslie's tumultuous thoughts seemed

to become a part of theirs, and he turned to look at the picturesque waiting groups with an understanding sympathy in his kind eyes.

His face was rather weary, and his ready smile a little slower than when he had left America such a short while before. Even in peaceful Switzerland some of the great war's tragedy had been vividly unrolled before him. His search for Bob, through the Spanish Embassy at Berlin, had been a short one, for American prisoners were few and easily identified, but after that had come hopeless days of waiting in which he had looked failure in the face. The German government showed no inclination to set Bob free, and Mr. Leslie would have gone home unsuccessful if the prisoner he sought had not become a trial and menace to the prison camp that harbored him. Mr. Leslie blessed the fever as he waited for the train that was bringing Bob to the frontier. This realization of his highest hopes brought a warm flood of joy to his heart as he thought of the message that was even then winging its way across the sea.

Suddenly a little commotion rose among the crowd of people. They cried out and pointed around the bend of track, among the trees. At Mr. Leslie's side a little girl begged to be raised to her mother's shoulders, and the woman, as she lifted her, had tears streaming down her pale young face.

The puff of smoke around the bend thickened, the engine whistled, and slowly the long train came into view. A wild cheer went up from men's and women's throats along the platform. Mr. Leslie swallowed hard and winked the mist from his eyes. His heart was beating faster than was comfortable as he went forward, as near as the watchful guards allowed, to meet the slowing train.

Inside, stretchers were made ready for those prisoners—and they were many—who could not walk from their places; others, who had lain on their stretchers on stationary racks along the car, were lifted out by willing and tender hands. But all who by any exertion of courage and strength could walk out unassisted made shift to do so, and with these Bob Gordon stood up wearily and tried his legs to make sure they would hold him.

"No, I'm all right—I don't need you, *merci*," he told a waiting attendant, not caring whether he spoke French or English. He was only afraid that his head would burst with the rush of joy that came at sight of that little station, with the far-off mountains behind it, that spot outside of Germany which told him he was free. He saw his feelings reflected in the worn faces about him—no pain had power to check it for that moment—and with a sudden return of some of his old agile strength, Bob walked from the car and stepped down upon the platform.

Mr. Leslie saw him before he reached the ground. Through the crowd of sad and joyful welcomers he made a swift way to his side. He had not seen the boy for a year or more—not since furlough—he told himself, desperately forcing back the shock of pity and distress that smote him at sight of that thin, white young face and slow-moving figure. Was this Bob, who had never been able to move quickly enough?

"The boy's had a fever, of course," Mr. Leslie muttered, though his heart refused to think it a quite satisfactory explanation.

But just then Bob saw and recognized him, and the old merry smile came swiftly to his lips. He raised his cap and waved it in a weak hurrah.

All Mr. Leslie's conflicting emotions vanished in the swift rush of one thought—whatever he had been through, Bob was free! "Hello! Hello!" he shouted, hardly knowing what he said.

"You, Cousin Henry! How on earth ——" cried Bob, thrilling between astonishment and utter happiness as Mr. Leslie, carefully avoiding a wounded French soldier's toddling little son, reached past the guards to grasp Bob's outstretched hand.

CHAPTER XVIII

CAPTAIN LUCY

THE soldier at the telegraph office on Governor's Island has a busy time of it—especially since the outbreak of war. Cablegrams are nothing uncommon to him—he is prepared for anything. But that did not prevent his rising from his place in a burst of excitement one cold morning toward the end of January, with a yellow paper in his hand.

"What do you think?" he demanded of the man who had just come in to relieve him. "Listen to this: 'To Major James Gordon: Exchanged; all well; signed, Leslie.'"

"What? Bob Gordon?" exclaimed the other, somewhat disrespectfully but with great heartiness. "Say, isn't that fine? You'd better tell the Major in double-quick."

The outgoing operator took his advice and sat down before the telephone. In a moment he had Major Gordon on the wire. "Cablegram, sir. Shall I proceed?"

"Yes—yes—go ahead." Major Gordon's voice was not very steady. The soldier promptly gave the message, in the cheerful tone of a good-hearted

fellow who knew he was communicating the best of news. He and his mate had seen Bob on furlough and graduation leave—he seemed still more a West Point cadet than an officer. They had a very friendly feeling for him.

"Thanks!" came Major Gordon's voice as he hung up, and the word sounded as though he meant it.

"Must have been in a bad way if the Germans let him go," commented the relief, sitting down to work.

"He'll get back to the fight again, though—mark my words," was the other man's thoughtful prophecy.

Major Gordon had just come home from a long afternoon's inspection of Q. M. stores when the telephone rang. He had looked and felt both tired and sad but in two minutes all was changed. When he turned away after taking that short message his eyes had regained their old brightness, his lips parted in a smile as merry as Bob's own, the little stoop to his shoulders straightened, as with a quick, eager stride he reached the foot of the stairs and shouted for the whole house to hear, "Sally! Lucy! Bob's exchanged!"

In an hour the whole post knew of it, and half the garrison was at the Gordons' door with joyful greetings. But for a little while Lucy could not

go down to welcome them, and Marian took her place when Julia and Anne came to rejoice with her over the long awaited message. Lucy had not cried in many days, and her courage had stood by her until Marian marveled at her calm cheerfulness, but now she could be brave no longer. She sank down among the pillows of her little sofa and did not try to restrain the tears of joy and gratitude that poured down her cheeks. It seemed too good to be true—beyond belief—and more than once in that brief half hour Lucy raised her head and looked with tear-wet eyes from the window at the familiar landmarks of the post, to reassure herself that she was not in a happy dream. "Bob's safe—he's out of prison," she said over and over, to hear how the words sounded, and what finally led her to dry her eyes and leave her refuge on the sofa was the eager desire to show Marian the gratitude she could not yet give Mr. Leslie for his generous devotion.

Next to her longing to hear from Bob by his own hand, Lucy wished to see her friend Captain Jourdin and tell him of Bob's freedom. She had seen real sympathy and interest in the Frenchman's bright, dark eyes, and she thought he might be able to tell her more about Bob's release than they had guessed from the few words of Mr. Leslie's cable. Dispatches from Washington, following shortly after, told no more than the bare fact of the ex-

change, and it seemed unlikely that they could learn anything else for several days.

"It all depends on their reason for letting him go," said Captain Brent at the Gordons' that night. "They were either very anxious to get an aviator of their own back again—or else he was released for some other reason." Captain Brent evaded the probable "other reason," as Mr. Leslie had done in Lucy's hearing. He guessed, as Major Gordon did, that Bob was either ill or wounded, but Major Gordon felt confident, from the "all well" of Mr. Leslie's message, that there was no ground for heavy anxiety in his behalf.

"But do you think he'll go back to fight? How I wish we could see him and find out everything!" cried Lucy, with longing in her eyes.

"You may be sure he'll go back as soon as possible," declared Captain Brent. "But I think they might give him a month's leave to come home—they probably will."

"Oh, don't you suppose Captain Jourdin would come to see us if you asked him?" Lucy begged. "You see he's an aviator and so is Bob and I know he's interested. I want so much to talk to him again. He'd come if you asked him, wouldn't he, Captain Brent?"

"Why, perhaps he would, Lucy. You see he's awfully busy, and besides that he hates going about,

because every one wants to make a hero of him, and he doesn't feel like one. But I think he'll come if your mother asks me to bring him. I don't know much about how exchanges are being managed in this war myself. He might tell us something."

As a result of this talk Captain Jourdin did come to the Gordons' one evening soon after, and though he could only guess at the circumstances of Bob's release he told Lucy one bit of welcome news about her brother.

"The dispatches say that the American Flying Squadron released Von Arnheim for Lieutenant Gordon. The squadron must think highly of your son's ability, Madame," he said to Mrs. Gordon, with a light in his brown eyes, "for they have given up a famous man to secure his freedom. I met Von Arnheim once—over Rheims. I thought he had me for a while. I still have a bullet he gave me somewhere in my shoulder-bone."

"How did you get away?" asked Lucy, breathlessly, forgetting Captain Brent's caution not to ask the pilot about his exploits.

"Oh, I flew away," said Captain Jourdin, laughing. "I just turned tail and, as they say here, 'beat it.'"

"Do you think Bob will go back to the war?" asked Marian, shyly.

"Why not, Miss? Of course he will—though

perhaps he may need rest for a time," Captain Jourdin added, with a flicker of meaning in his eyes. "Perhaps they will give him a furlough at home. In that case we can fly together here. I shall meet him with much pleasure."

He rose a moment later to take leave, and Captain Brent, lingering a few moments after him, said, "Do you know what he's hoping for? He's no end cheerful lately. Some doctor in New York is doing wonders for his ankle. He even promises Jourdin that he can get back into the service. The French surgeons will give him every chance to pass."

"Well, I should think so!" cried Lucy with enthusiasm. "Wouldn't that be great? I suppose he'll do all those wonderful feats over again. It must be fun thinking about the great things you've done, even if you don't want to talk them over."

"You bet it must be!" said Captain Brent, smiling. "You'll see Bob wearing no end of medals and crosses yet. He's got the true aviator's spirit. I must get back to my quarters and go to bed," he added, as Lucy gave him a delighted smile at this praise of her brother. "We are out on parade to-morrow. Every airplane that can wriggle its propeller is to fly, so I'll have to be on the field early."

No part of the post's war activity was so absorbing to Marian as the aviation school. At Captain Brent's words her eyes brightened with eager interest, as she inquired of him the hours for which the trial flights were scheduled.

"We'll go, Lucy," she said, and Lucy laughed agreement.

"Don't leave any machines around loose, Captain Brent," she cautioned, "or you'll find Marian curled up in the observer's seat in disguise. If Bob comes home I know she means to persuade him somehow to take her up."

Marian was still rather timid about sudden dangers or emergencies, but the smooth, swift flight of an airplane seemed utterly delightful to her, and as far back as September, in the midst of her shy reserve, she had understood Bob's longing for a place in this splendid new arm of the service.

She and Lucy were early among the crowd that thronged the borders of the aviation field on the following afternoon, and as one machine after the other was rolled out and, gliding down the field on its little wheels, rose toward the clear sunny sky, Marian watched them with sparkling eyes. Captain Jourdin was in one of them, and Lucy picked his machine out at every swerve and loop, by the swift, easy evolutions he performed, so far above

their heads that sometimes airplane and pilot looked a gyrating speck among the clouds.

"Marian, I think my neck will break in a minute!" she exclaimed at last, recalling her thoughts from visions of Bob's future as Captain Brent had so generously predicted it, while she closed her eyes for a second against the blue, dazzling heavens, across which the airplanes swooped and darted. "There's Julia," she said a moment later. "I'm going over to speak to her."

Lucy walked back from the field a little to join her friend. Other inspections were in progress on the parade, where a battalion of infantry was marching in review. Over the music of the band as it played one of Harry Lauder's stirring airs that made the soldiers' feet move faster, Lucy said to Julia:

"They're fine, aren't they? But don't you still miss the old Twenty-Eighth? It doesn't seem as though any troops look as they did."

The music stopped, and Julia answered, looking at the little reviewing party advancing toward the companies, "I think one reason all the men here have done so well is because the old regiment gave them such a splendid example. They were first in the trenches—think what that means."

"Bob said Mr. Harding was so proud," said Lucy, softly. "Oh, I wish we could hear some-

thing about him! When I think of the night he said good-bye so cheerfully at the dock, I can't realize that he may never come back. I feel ashamed to have been thinking all the time of Bob."

"Goodness, you needn't," said Julia, giving Lucy's arm a friendly squeeze. "But after Bob's wonderful good fortune I can't help feeling more hopeful about other people. It seems as if there were a big chance for everybody."

"You and Marian are a nice little pair of optimists," remarked Lucy, musingly. "Still, I sort of think you're right."

"Let's get Marian and go home," Julia suggested, digging her cold hands into her pockets. "The flights are almost over."

Lucy reëntered the house with red cheeks and out of breath, having run most of the way home across the snow.

"Isn't it cold?" said Marian, shivering. "Still, I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

Lucy did not answer, for her eyes were fixed on a postal which the mailman had dropped, as he always did whatever he brought, on the post at the foot of the stairs. It was addressed to her, but—and this made Lucy stare at it with bated breath—it was addressed in her own writing. Incredulous, she pulled off her glove and picked it up. The writing on the other side was strange—far

neater and smaller than Dick Harding's, but at the bottom was the familiar R. H.

"Marian!" she burst out, in a rush of bewildered joy, "it's from him! Mr. Harding! Oh, I can't wait!"

She dropped down on the lowest step of the stairs and Marian collapsed into an eager heap beside her, as she bent over the card and read:

"DEAR CAPTAIN LUCY: Are you surprised, or did the dispatches saying I'm not 'missing' any longer get ahead of this? I cabled my family in the Islands to-day, and in my old coat I found this card and remembered my promise. I am pretty well knocked up still, but nothing to worry over. I was picked up wounded after the rumpus, by some women, and taken to a French farmhouse. Nobody knew where I was, until I got better and told the good people who took care of me to send word to our lines. Before that happened the country around was heavily bombarded, and no one dared stir from the house that sheltered me. I am in a big hospital now, being fed and petted like a pussy-cat. My nurse says there's no more room to write, so good-bye. Best wishes for Bob's luck in the Flying Corps. R. H."

"Oh, Lucy, how wonderful!" cried Marian, her blue eyes shining, and her cheeks pink with excitement and delight. "To think he should have

remembered you right off, and let you know he was safe!"

Lucy's heart was beating joyfully and hard, and for a moment she could scarcely speak, but when she did it was to say with sober earnestness:

"If I ever get down-hearted again, Marian, just remind me of this. I never thought I'd see or hear from him again!"

Pride in her old friend's constancy was not the greatest part of her happiness just then, but it did have a share in it when Major Gordon came in a few hours later with official confirmation of Mr. Harding's safety.

"News doesn't get from Washington very fast, Cousin James," said Marian, as the family received Major Gordon's announcement with cheerful calm. "Lucy has heard already from the front."

After those endless days which the Gordons would never forget, when they waited hour after hour and day after day, for the news that never came, it seemed all at once as though good things were coming, almost before they were expected. The house was a different place in this last week, and more than once Lucy saw the old, bright smile linger on her mother's face.

"Isn't it lots nicer since Bob made the Germans let him go?" William asked his sister one day after a moment's thoughtful silence.

"Rather," was Lucy's short answer, but it seemed as though she said much more than that.

At last Bob's letter came, and with the reading of it, some at least of the darkness that had encircled him was cleared away. He could not tell all his adventures of the past two months, but through the lines the quick, sympathetic hearts of those at home guessed, as he had known they would, of the loneliness and misery that had so nearly overcome his brave spirit.

"You never could guess what one letter would have meant to me," he said, when his cautious reserve, lest they should think him almost done for, was for the moment forgotten. "If ever I have prisoners to guard—Boches, or I don't care whom—I'll give them their letters from home. It doesn't help win the war to keep them back, and it gives the prisoner a bitter feeling toward his captors that he'll never forget as long as he lives.

"But I'm all right now," he wrote cheerfully. "Cousin Henry and I are in a snug little French village near the coast, where a lot of convalescent officers and men are put up for a month or so. It's just perfect to me—the freedom and the feeling of being among friends again. Having plenty to eat is pretty comfortable, too. Once or twice I've caught Cousin Henry looking curiously at me, as though he thought I was never going to stop. I've tried to thank him for getting me out, and I've written the Spanish Ambassador at Berlin

(by way of Spain), but there's no use trying to tell them all I feel. You have to be in prison to know how it feels to get out. I only hope that Sergeant Cameron has got at least one of the packages I've sent him through Switzerland. Just let's pray our army gets over here quickly by the million, and the beastly war comes to an end before 1918 is over.

"They say I can have leave to go home, but if I keep on getting well here at this rate, honestly, I don't see how I can ask it. That's for the doctor to decide anyway, so I won't bother. But when you're on this side and see all that's waiting to be done! I don't wonder Father feels the way he does about coming over, but if there is nobody behind us at home to send on the men and the supplies, where will we be?

"My captain sent me congratulations on my exchange. They had tried to negotiate one before, to see if they could find out what had become of us—especially Benton. But it fell through, and they couldn't discover anything. It was only the fever that let me out. The German they exchanged me for is a first rate pilot. I've seen him fly, and it makes me wild to think of his getting back to work before I can do my bit again. It's that makes a leave seem impossible, if I can get well here. If everybody sticks it out and does what he can to help win, before very long we'll all be home for good.

"Cousin Henry sails next week, so pretty soon you'll know all he has to tell about me. I'll never forget how good it looked to see his face when that

train drew up beside the Swiss frontier. At first he looked worried, but not long, for I got well so fast. He thinks I'm all right now.

"It's only the first lap of the race that's over, but I came out of it with such luck, I'm not afraid to face the next."

Lucy and Marian had taken the letter up-stairs to read a second time, and when it was finished Marian looked at her cousin anxiously, for Lucy had fallen into a revery, and sat with sober, thoughtful eyes, and close-set lips. Marian thought she knew what the doubt of Bob's home-coming must mean to her.

"But, Lucy, he seems so well and happy," she said at last, uncertainly. "He wants so awfully to get back and fly."

Lucy raised her eyes and smiled, her chin cupped in her hand.

"I'm not worrying about him, Marian. It's just that there's a lot to think about."

In the long, hard days of Bob's imprisonment Lucy had found the courage to endure which Bob himself had sought so often. And once found she meant to cling to it. "Only the first lap of the race," Bob had said, but to Lucy it seemed as though the race were half won, for never, never, she told herself, would she again give way to hopeless fears—no matter what dark days were ahead—

since out of the deadly danger of battle-field and prison camp Bob had once come safely back.

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